

CLEAN

7 STEPS TO FREEDOM



ADDICTION RECOVERY
WORKBOOK

RICH KOLLENBERG

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WORKBOOK**

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Contents

Preface

Introduction

Step 1: Acknowledge and Admit (*A A*)

Step 2: Begin to Believe (*B B*)

Step 3: Complete Control (*C C*)

Step 4: Different Direction (*D D*)

Step 5: Erase Errors (*E E*)

Step 6: Forever Forgiven (*F F*)

Step 7: God's Grace (*G G*)

Preface

In 1996, my wife Susan and I both broke free from addiction to alcohol, tobacco, cocaine, and methamphetamine. All that is the past for us now.

Collectively, however, we spent nearly 50 years in bondage to mind-altering substances and destructive behaviors. We believe it's helpful, therefore, to share some of the things we've learned in our recovery.

Through this workbook, we hope to offer you the recipe that worked for us in obtaining true, lasting freedom.

A few years back, I ran into an old friend with whom I used to use drugs. I hadn't seen him in more than a decade. In fact, the last time I saw him, we were using meth together.

Ten years later, our stories were completely different. He had continued to use meth for those next 10 years. I hardly recognized him; he had lost so much weight and his eyes were sunk back in his head. We looked at each other, and both of us began to weep. He kept saying to me, over and over, how good it was to see me and that I really looked good. Finally, after a long embrace, I looked him in the eyes and said, "Randy, you don't have to live like this."

"I don't?" was his sad reply.

"No, Randy. You don't." It struck me at that moment that no one had ever told him that before. He knew no other way; therefore, there was no other way.

Yet a decade earlier, I was like Randy. I was thoroughly convinced that I was going to live as a drug addict for the rest of my life. I was certain in my heart that addiction was my destiny. But then it changed.

So what was it that freed me? Who was it that finally told me the truth? How was I spared from the lies in my head?

This workbook will answer these questions and many, many more. If you are an addict, it will help you understand why you do the things you do and teach you how to be honest with yourself. It will give you a practical understanding of the nature of addiction and will provide the tools you need to break free.

Just because you don't know of another way doesn't mean there is no other way. My wife and I have seen the other way, and we are living it right now.

Please join us.

—Rich Kollenberg



Rich and Susan
Just As I Am Ministries
www.justasiamministries.com

Introduction

How to Use This Workbook

This addiction recovery workbook was put together for one reason: to give you a meaningful, tangible process in which to break free from addiction.

This workbook is a seven-step addiction recovery manual designed for both individual and group settings and for most types of substance and behavioral addictions, leaning more favorably to assistance in alcohol and drug addiction recovery.

It is highly recommended that any addiction recovery be done in a group setting to get the maximum benefit from the workbook, as well as the additional benefits that come with group support. There is also a group facilitator's guide available to complement this addiction recovery workbook.

However, if you are using this workbook as a recovering addict without a support group, it is highly recommended that you be in constant contact with an experienced accountability partner, as well as a counselor and/or medical professional.

As we go through this workbook together, it will take us on a profound journey that will open your eyes to things you might not have known about the world around you—and new things about yourself—that can make all the difference.

We will understand that maybe we haven't had everything quite right in our minds, but we will also understand that there is hope, freedom, and peace ... things that are available to us if we are ready to make some different, and possibly difficult, choices.

If you received this workbook as part of a kit:

1) Look through your kit to make sure everything is included. You should have:

- A journal (see below)
- *Clean: 7 Steps to Freedom* pocket book

- 3 x 5 cards and pencils
- *Steps to Christ*
- Music CD

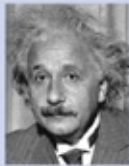
2) Begin writing in your journal today.

- Write down significant things that come to your mind as you read.
- Write down those things you are thankful for; this is your gratitude list.
- Write down your fears, desires, friends, and enemies.
- Honestly include your daily struggles, failures, and successes.
- Include three things that you don't have now that you want for your future.

Step One

Acknowledge and Admit

The first step in fixing things that are wrong in my life is to realize that there is something wrong.



"Insanity: doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results."
—Albert Einstein

Did you know? Every time you find a quote in this workbook, you'll also find something very interesting in a box like this.

In this first step, we will first learn some important definitions that will help us to evaluate some of those things that we keep doing over and over again.

We will also learn that even though we sometimes feel like a hamster in a cage running on an endless wheel, that our life is going nowhere, we can actually change.



1) Mistakes: *What Exactly Are They?*



► **Mistake:** An incorrect, unwise, or unfortunate act or decision caused by bad judgment or a lack of information or concern.

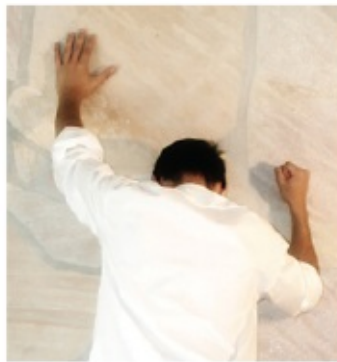
Everyone makes mistakes; it's just the way it is. However, the fact that we have made mistakes in our lives doesn't mean that our lives are a mistake.

We don't like to make mistakes, but they happen, and then we, and quite possibly others, have to live with the cost of those mistakes. Mistakes and poor decisions always have unpleasant consequences, so it is important that we learn what can cause mistakes.

So what can cause mistakes? When **we're in a hurry, stressed out, tired, or just not paying attention**, there's a good chance we'll slip up. Throughout life, there are times when we allow **our emotions to take over**, causing us to make mistakes. For instance, **an angry or jealous person** is much more likely to make a mistake than someone who is in control of their emotions. **Being prideful or hardheaded** might also cause us to make mistakes.

Did you know? A person's three-pound brain is the most complex and orderly arrangement of matter known in the universe.

"The only real mistake is the one from which we learn nothing."
—John Powell



Keep in mind that there is a difference between making a mistake and intentionally doing something wrong. As we look back on our own lives, our personal histories might be riddled with miscues. Sometimes, we did not set out to make those mistakes, but we made them nonetheless.

Mistakes, however, when repeated often enough, can become much more than just mistakes, as we are about to learn.

- List below some of the things that can cause mistakes.

2) Habits: *Friends or Foes?*



► **Habit:** An action or pattern of behavior that is repeated so often that it becomes typical of somebody, although he or she might be unaware of it.

Our brains form a million new connections every second of our lives. It is in these changing connections that **memories are stored, personalities are shaped, and habits are learned.**

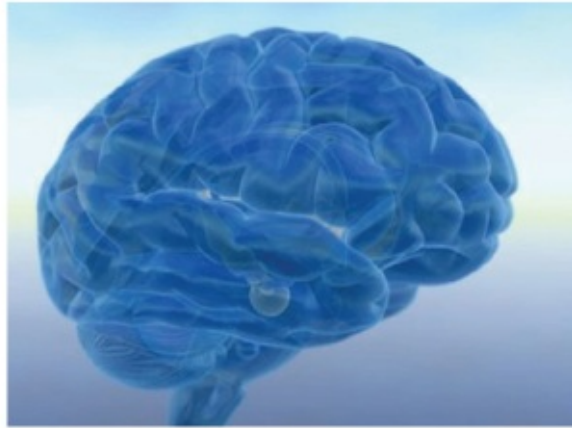
Habits, scientifically speaking, are chemical reactions that happen in the brain, and they actually change the structure of the brain:

“What you are thinking right now can actually change the chemical composition of your brain cells and the rest of your central nervous system” (Schizophrenia Bulletin, Vol. 28, No. 3, 2002, p. 553).

Our brains remember and automate certain activities into habits so that it can free itself up for thinking; in this way, the brain becomes more efficient.

Put simply, habits are our friends when they're good; they are our enemies when they're bad.

Even though **we are not always in control** of some of our habits, **we can control good habits.** These habits might include such things as good hygiene, good sleep habits, punctuality, safe driving, **good manners, eating healthy, proper exercise,** etc. It's important that we maintain good habits so that we can **live happy, healthy lives and to stay in control of our lives.**



- How many new connections do our brains form • every second of our lives?



- What happens in these changing connections?

- What we are thinking right now can actually do what?



- Are we always aware of our habits? Yes / No
- Are there habits that we can control? Yes / No
- If so, list a few:

- Is it important to maintain good habits? Yes / No
Why?

3) Addictions: *Just Bad Habits ... Or Something Worse?*



➤ **Addiction:** A habit that controls you; we don't control addictions.

Addictions are divided into two classes: **substance** and **behavioral**.

There are many different types of substances to which we can become addicted. These range from **illegal drugs**, such as methamphetamine and cocaine, to **alcohol**, **cigarettes**, and **prescription narcotics**. Even things like **chocolate** and some types of **soda** are addictive.

On the behavioral side, there is a wide range of things we can mention. Did you know that **being angry all the time** is actually a behavioral addiction? What else? A person that **continually gossips** or is **always jealous might be addicted to those behaviors**. Of course, obvious behavioral addictions include **sex** (including Internet pornography), **gambling**, **overeating**, **texting**, **being a control freak**, and **shopping**.



- What is an addiction?



- What are the two classes of addictions?

1. _____ 2. _____

- List some possible addictions:

Substance

Behavioral

Ten Signs of Addiction

1. Spending excessive time in a certain behavior or in the use of a certain substance

2. Repeated failure with attempts to decrease time with a substance or behavior

3. Participation more than intended

4. Lying, cheating, and hiding

5. Disproportionate or excessive planning regarding a substance or behavior

6. Depression and anxiety
7. Failing of family, work, and/or school because of a substance or behavior
8. The trade-off or giving up of useful activities
9. A diminishing capacity to enjoy other pleasure
10. Withdrawal symptoms when use stops



Ten Symptoms of Withdrawal

1. Physical inconsistencies (fever, chills, etc.)
2. Depression or deep sadness
3. Loss of drive (desire to make plans, to engage in normal activities)
4. Fatigue
5. Cravings

6. Unable to concentrate or an increased inability to stay focused
7. Anger and aggression
8. Insomnia
9. Thoughts of suicide
10. Restlessness and anxiety



4) The Truth About Lies: *How Bad Do They Hurt Us?*

In this section, we will define what truth and lies are, what their relationships to communication are, and why these ways of communicating with ourselves and others is so important in addiction recovery.



"It is better to ultimately succeed with the truth than to temporarily succeed with a lie."
—Adrian Rodgers

Did you know? One-fifth of the oxygen we inhale is used up by the brain.

You might not realize it, but you actually **communicate with yourself far more than you communicate with others.**

The communication network within the mind is very complex: Messages get transmitted in physical sensations, visual images, and by thought patterns. It's these thought patterns that we need to address when we're talking about truth and lies.



As mentioned earlier, scientists have discovered that what we think actually changes the chemical composition of our brain cells and the rest of our central nervous system.

In other words, **if we are continually thinking angry thoughts, we are teaching our brains to become angry brains.** If we choose to dwell on violence, our brains will become violent-thinking brains and we will act violent.



This is why what we tell ourselves is so important. **If we tell ourselves lies,**

we will believe lies, so it is important that in this step we define very clearly what truth and lies are and what their roles are in communicating with ourselves and with others.

- Who do we communicate more with, ourselves or others?

- If we are continually thinking angry thoughts, what are we doing?

- If we tell ourselves lies, what will we believe?

As we explore some of the things that we might tell ourselves under certain conditions of addiction, we must first set some simple boundaries. We will start with simple definitions of “truth” and “lies.” Our goal is not to become philosophical; our goal is to identify behaviors as clearly and simply as possible.



▶ **Truth:** *Something that corresponds to fact or reality.*



“The truth will set you free, but first it will make you miserable.”
—James Garfield

Did you know? It takes 17 muscles to smile—but 40 muscles to frown.

It’s important that we understand what truth is. **By knowing what truth is, we can identify an honest person and we will also be able to recognize when someone is lying.** Knowing the difference between the truth and a lie will be a huge determining factor on whether or not someone can break free from their addictions.



► **Honesty:** The quality, condition, or characteristic of being fair, truthful, and morally upright.

It's great to be around someone that we know tells the truth—or that even if we aren't in that person's presence, we can still have confidence in anything they do or say. To put it simply, the attribute of honesty is a great thing to have in one's character.



► **Lie:** (noun) A false statement made deliberately; (verb) To say something that is not true in a conscious effort to deceive somebody.



"The worst lies are the lies we tell ourselves. We live in denial of what we do, even what we think."
—Richard Bach

Did you know? If the liver stops working, a person will die in 8 to 24 hours.

Lies are bad for many different reasons. **Lies hurt and upset people; they cause confusion and division; and ultimately the end result of lies is shame.** One of the worst things that we can do to ourselves is to tell ourselves lies. When we tell ourselves that **we are worthless**, or that **we don't need help**, we are lying to ourselves. We also must beware of "inclusive" statements, such as **"I'll never amount to anything"** or **"I'm a failure at everything I do."** These categorical statements are very dangerous because they influence the way we think about ourselves. Last, but not least, there is the lie that gets us all into trouble: **"just this once."**

There are two main reasons why we lie to ourselves. The first reason, sort of a **defense mechanism**, is to **lower our own expectations of ourselves.** This gives us an excuse not to try, and it allows failure to become acceptable to us.

The second reason, one of the biggest lies an addict will tell himself, is that **he is not an addict.** If he says he's not an addict, he feels there is no reason to ask for help. The next lie, **"I don't need any help,"** naturally follows, and you

can't help someone that believes he doesn't need help because he won't allow you to help. Remember, as we learned earlier, if we tell ourselves lies, we will believe lies, and that's how we turn our brains into lying brains.



- What is truth?

- Why is it important that we understand what truth is?

- What is a lie?



- Why are lies so bad for us?

- Do we lie to ourselves? Yes / No


- What are some lies that we might tell ourselves?

- Why do we lie to ourselves?

Reason #1



Reason #2



Did you know? If your entire DNA code was stretched out, it would reach to the moon 6,000 times.

**"The naked truth is always better than the best dressed lie."
—Ann Landers**

Are you ready to be honest about your condition and your behavior?

- Please circle one and give the reason why: Yes / No

• • • **Identify** • • •

List the addiction or addictions that you are struggling with. Remember both categories, **substance** and **behavioral**.

5) Choices: *Do We Even Have a Choice?*

Did you know? The human heart pumps 1.5 million gallons of blood a year.

"Destiny is not a matter of chance, but a matter of choice. It is not a thing to be waited for; it is a thing to be achieved."
—William Jennings Bryan



Did you know that **an addiction, in one sense, can actually take away our power of choice?** The substance or behavior to which we are addicted **forces its demands upon us and causes us to be slaves to it** and, therefore, overrules our power of choice.

When someone goes to the store to buy cigarettes, who makes the choice? Him or his habit? The smoker has given himself over to that substance or behavior.

Many times, we will tell ourselves that we want to be free to use a certain substance or engage in a certain behavior, but our freedom is lost **when that certain substance or behavior tells us when and where we will engage in it.**

- What has our addictions done to our power of choice?

-
-
- How does it do this?
-
-

- When is our freedom lost?

Throughout the daily routine of life, we are constantly making choices. We choose when to get up in the morning and when to go to bed at night, when to eat and what to eat. When we're driving, we even choose whether or not we are going to obey the traffic laws. Chances are, on any given day, we will make both good and bad choices. **One of the goals of this program is to help us learn how to make better choices.**

Did you know? The human eye can distinguish about 17,000 different colors.

*"Life is change. Growth is optional. Choose wisely."
—Karen Kaiser Clark*



- Do we have a choice? Yes / No

Explain:

-
-
- What is one of the goals of this program?

• • • *Identify* • • •

List some of the choices you are making in your life right now, both good and

bad.

My good choices

My bad choices

Are you making some bad choices? Yes / No

If so, do you have the desire to start making better choices? Yes / No

Why?

Do you know how to start making better choices? Yes / No

Explain:

List the bad habits or addictions that you are engaged in and then write down all **the reasons that you do them**, then all **the reasons that you shouldn't do them**. It's now time to be honest with yourself:

Bad habit or addiction:

The reasons that I do it

The reasons that I shouldn't

Bad habit or addiction:

The reasons that I do it

The reasons that I shouldn't

Bad habit or addiction:

The reasons that I do it

The reasons that I shouldn't

Lessons from Life

The Water Filter: My wife and I live on a piece of 10-acre property that my father gave to us after he passed away. It's a beautiful piece of land, and we don't deserve it, but the Lord has blessed us and we're very thankful for that. This property has two homes: the house that Susan and I live in and the one that my father lived in before he passed away. We now rent that home out to a wonderful family.



They very rarely complain about anything, but every once in a while their water pressure will get lower and lower, and I will get a call with the request to change the water filter at the well.

This filter is quite large and a bit hard to get to because it screws in upside down. It also requires a special wrench to remove the canister to replace the filter. This needs to be done about every two or three months, and it's not a job that I look forward to because the filter canister is so hard to remove. Most of the time, I have my friend Juan help me. He is a very large man. How large? Let's just say, he's a very large man.

Well, on one particular occasion, Juan and I began to attempt to take the filter canister off. But it just wouldn't come off. We began putting extensions on the special wrench and beating on the wrench with our fists. I even went uptown to get a second wrench. This was frustrating because I had to buy an entirely new filter assembly to get the new wrench.

We then put both wrenches on the canister and got hammers out. It would turn a little bit but just wouldn't break loose. Finally, we gave up for the day because we needed to turn the water back on for the family. Needless to say, I went back home discouraged, wondering what I was going to do to get that filter off without totally annihilating it.

Then, that evening, in the quiet of the night, a still small voice told me: "Rich, look at your hand; it's all bruised up, and you still haven't got the filter off! Why? Because you're turning the filter canister the wrong direction."

How foolish do you think I felt at that time?

The Lesson Is This: The road to recovery can be a humbling experience.

Just like with the water filter, the last thing I want to do is admit to anyone that I am going about things the wrong way. The reason I couldn't remove the filter after working on it for two days wasn't for lack of effort; it was because I was foolishly turning it in the wrong direction.

We can round up all the help and all the tools that we can possibly find, we can even beat ourselves up and wear ourselves out, but like the canister, if we're heading in the wrong direction, it doesn't matter how hard we try—we will not succeed.



At some point in our lives, we all reach a fork in the road, and it is so important that we choose the right road: the road to recovery. Have you been going about things the wrong way? Have you been headed in the wrong direction? Are you tired of fighting? Remember, there are only two ways to do anything: the right way and the wrong way.

6) Conclusion



Everyone makes mistakes and bad choices; that's what makes life so difficult. But when we're able to admit that we have a problem, we are well on our way to true freedom.

Keep in mind, our addictions aren't just a "weakness" or something "we just need a little help with." As we have learned in Step 1, the choices we've been making in our lives have been actions controlled entirely by our addictions; therefore, we must admit that we're not in control of our lives—and something else is.

This is what it means to be powerless. Powerless people don't have any choice but to let their addictions or other people make their choices for them.

When we are no longer running our lives, it means that "something else" is. That "something else" is making our decisions for us. It means that our addictions are stronger than we are, and they are forcing their demands on us. No matter what it is—drugs, sex, money, gambling, alcohol, anger, resentment, procrastination—we must admit that we are powerless over it.

As we conclude this step, there are some serious questions we need to ask ourselves: Are we ready to be completely and totally honest about our behavior? To what extent have the results of our decisions caused harm to others and to us? Are we really serious about walking away from short-term pleasure and longterm destruction? Are we finally tired of hurting other people? Are we truly tired of having our power of choice taken away from us by our addictions? Are our lives and the lives of those around us worth it?

I now choose to acknowledge that I have habits in my life that are controlling me

and admit that some of the choices I have made and am making right now are not good choices. I also choose to admit that “my way” isn’t working.

Signature

7) Step 1 Exercise

Drink plenty of water (8 glasses recommended per day) and go for a 45-minute walk at least once a day (preferably twice a day). Get an accountability partner (same gender as you) and start journaling (see introduction on page 7).

Weekly Progress Chart

Day of the Week	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
Write in the number of glasses of water you drank today:							
Write down the number of minutes you walked today:							
Did you make contact with your accountability partner today?							
Did you journal today?							
Did you review Step 1 in your workbook today?							

Step Two

Begin to Believe

Having admitted that my way hasn't worked in the past and will not work in the future, I must begin to believe that another way, a better way, to find freedom is available to me.



Beginning to believe starts a whole new way of thinking; it's a process. Remember, for a long time, we addicts actually believed "our way" was working. We need to look for another way, because we now understand that **we have allowed our addictions to take our power of choice away from us—and we want to get that back.** We also understand that in this area of our lives, we are powerless and in need of help. We believed in ourselves, but we failed. Now what?

- Why is it important that we look for another way?

1) The Rut: What Is It, and How Do We Break Out of It?

As a child, on your way to school or on your way to a friend's house, did you ever have a favorite path that you took—a route where, perhaps, you cut across somebody's lawn or an open field? Did you also notice that, after a while, the grass in the field became worn ... and that it became so worn that, whenever you went that way, you didn't even have to think about where you were going anymore—you just followed the worn path, the rut, so to speak?



This is very similar to what happens in our brains. When our brains form a habit, good or bad, the brain's neurons fire in the same place over and over again. If it's a good habit, we call it discipline. But when it's a bad habit, we will sometimes describe it as being in a rut. To put it simply, our brains develop 'rutted' neural pathways.

What are we really saying when we say that we are trying to break out of a rut? Why is it so hard to break out of these ruts? To get a clearer picture, let's expand our illustration—let's use the example of a rut in the road, a path that has been formed by some type of vehicle through continued use:

Lessons from Life

Grandpa's Truck: My grandfather used to own a dairy farm and worked very hard to earn a living. I always got excited when it came time to watch him change the milking machines or herd the cows. I can even remember when I

helped him change sprinklers in the pasture.

Well, most of the pickup trucks back then had a compound gear that would allow the truck to move forward very slowly, almost at a walking pace. We called it the “granny gear.” The ruts in the dirt road that circled the pasture were so deep that Grandpa would just put the old ’57 GMC pickup in granny gear and leave me behind the wheel while he picked up the sprinkler pipe. Around the pasture, the truck would go at a snail’s pace, while Grandpa loaded the pipe on the truck with me behind the wheel.



At the time, I actually thought I was driving the truck. I was no more than seven years old at the time, and Grandpa knew that no matter how hard I tried to pull that steering wheel, there was no way I was going to break that truck free from those ruts. I vividly remember those long straight-aways where I would wiggle that steering wheel from left to right, grinning from ear to ear, acting like I was steering the pickup. Of course, any time a sharp turn came up, Grandpa was right there to help me navigate. As soon as we got to the gate to head back out to the paved road, my driving job was over.

The Lesson Is This: Just as I thought that I was actually driving the truck and in control of it, I look back now and see that I was in control of nothing.

What controlled the truck was the path that it had taken along for so many years before. Those ruts in the pasture were well-worn, and being a young child, I was powerless to steer that truck out of the grooves. The truck was simply following the path of least resistance.



This is the way it is with our brains: Once we form a habit, whether good or bad, the path that has been created by repeated neurons firing in our brain becomes **the path of least resistance**. Our brain will automatically now follow this path while we perform other tasks. When the path of least resistance has become a good habit formed in our brain, we are happy, efficient, and effective.

However, when the path becomes a bad habit, we must break out of the rut. But just like when I was behind the wheel of the old pickup, powerless to steer it out of the ruts by myself, we too, alone, don't have the power to change ourselves either. To break free and take a path less traveled requires **an open mind, willingness, effort, and courage**.

- Once we form a habit, whether good or bad, the path that has • been created by repeated firing in our brain is called what?

- To get out of the rut requires what?

2) Powerless: *Who Has Control?*

As we learned in Step 1, some of the choices we've been making in our lives have been choices controlled entirely by our addictions; therefore, we have admitted that we're not in control of our lives—something else is. What does it mean to be powerless?



▶ **Powerless:** *Lacking power, strength, or effectiveness.*

We've seen that we have not been effective in controlling our lives, and we've learned that this is what it means to be powerless and that powerless people don't have any choice **but to let their addictions or other people make their choices for them.**

- What have we seen that has shown us that we are powerless over our addictions?

- Powerless people don't have any choice but to do what?

- I understand that I am powerless over my addiction(s). Yes / No

- Referring back to Step 1 (page 18), what are those addictions?



3) My Way Vs. Another Way: *I Can Choose to Choose.*

As I look back on my past, it is abundantly clear that “my way” hasn’t worked. For a long time I actually believed “my way” was working, but now I understand that I need to find “another way.” As I look for another way, there are some questions in my mind that need to be answered.

We like to know things with certainty; it’s part of our nature. As human beings, we don’t like doubt. This raises our first major questions about God: How can we know that God is real? Does God really have a way out for us? Are we ready to look for answers to these questions?

It’s only natural to believe in ourselves. But **we soon understand that we’ve tried our very hardest but have failed**, and that’s why we must look for another way. So we each ask ourselves:

Is there a power outside myself that is greater than I am ... a power that loves me unconditionally, even when I can’t love myself? Is there someone that knows me better than I know myself?

Absolutely! He is called God, the creator of the universe. We need to think of Him and **Him alone as our solution**. It might be hard to believe, but **God actually wants to re-create us in His own image—according to His plan. God truly wants to help us!**

- Why must we choose to look for another way?
-

-
- I choose to look for another way. Yes / No



- Who can we now turn to for our solution?

Why?



Did you know? Two normal kidneys contain 2 million tiny blood filters, which process 50 gallons of blood every day.

*"We can try to avoid making choices by doing nothing, but even that is a decision."
—Gary Collins*

4) Evidence of a War: Is There More Going on Than Meets the Eye?

It was not God's plan for you to become an addict. God would never choose to place a single one of His creatures into a life of dependency on

alcohol, drugs, or any such thing. God is not to blame. Rather, something else is going on.

First, let's consider this: What is evidence?



► **Evidence:** Something that gives a sign or proof of the existence or truth of something, or that helps somebody to come to a particular conclusion.

As we look around the world today, more and more we see evidence that, yes, something quite definitely *is going on*. We see clearly through ever-increasing evidence that there is **a violent war between good and evil being waged right now**. We hear of young children being kidnapped, drive-by shootings, and corruption among our leaders. We ask ourselves, why do people do these things and what is it that's influencing them? It seems that nowadays it's even hard to hold a family together. Yes, there's definitely evidence that something else is going on, more than meets the eye.

We ask ourselves: If God is a god of love, why does He allow these things to happen? It's not a simple explanation, but it does start with one word: freedom. You see, from the very beginning, God has desired love from all of His created beings.

Yet in order for Him to receive real, meaningful love from them, **they must have the freedom and ability to choose to return that love**; otherwise, it wouldn't be love at all. People would serve Him because they were programmed to do so, not because of love.

Unfortunately, with that freedom to choose, **we as human beings have made it our tendency to choose evil** and follow the devil. This is the type of behavior that brings on a life of addiction and dependency. It is not God's actions.

Satan, that fallen angel called the devil, has been rebelling against God since before the world began. He is doomed and will eventually be destroyed, but we don't have to share that fate—from now on, we can choose God.

- Was it God's plan for you to become an addict? Yes / No
- Is there evidence of a war going on that we can't see? Yes / No
- What can we describe the war as?

- In order for God to receive real, meaningful love from them, what must His creatures have?
- What do we as human beings have a tendency to choose?

Lessons from Life



The Line in the Sand: Soon after my recovery from alcohol and methamphetamine addiction, I was hired as a superintendent for a concrete contractor. (*What were they thinking?*) After a few years, the company became very successful, and at one point I was managing six crews and 40 people. This involved dealing with the emotions of a broad spectrum of people, anywhere from drug addicts to churchgoers.

I recall a problem that I had with a certain foreman. He was a very good man, well-qualified, and I liked him a lot; in fact, he was a very good friend. But his problem was that he couldn't seem to show up to work on time. It would happen once or twice a week. I worked with him and worked with him. I even put better-qualified lead men with him to help him overcome this bad habit. The problem was that this bad habit was flowing downhill from his foreman's position. It was

flowing to the workers that were under him. Animosity sprung up, and bad things were being said about him and about how I was running the company.

I warned him over and over that his behavior was going to cost him; he'd lose the job if he didn't get it together. Believe it or not, this went on for nearly three years. I did everything I could for him, even covering for him at times, knowing that I was risking the harmony and well-being of our company. Then the day came when I got a call from the supervisor at a job we were working on wondering where this man was. A concrete truck was just sitting there, on the job site, and no one was there to pour it.

That was it. The line in the sand was drawn, and I had to do what I had to do; I took his truck, his position—I laid him off permanently.

The Lesson Is This: Who drew the line in the sand? It appears on the surface that I drew the line in the sand because of the measures that I took against him. However, this is not the case; this man drew the line in the sand by his behavior. He knew what the consequences of his actions would be if he continued in that behavior.



Likewise, God has done and is doing everything He can right now to help us. Let's not force His hand. God doesn't draw that line in the sand—we do. When we ignore the consequences of our choices, God is there to help us by pulling us out of those situations that are destroying us. That's His job, and He is very good at it.

The fact that we have chosen in the past to leave God **doesn't mean that God doesn't exist or that He has abandoned us.** We are not locked out of His

presence because of the things we have done.

In fact, if we look back on earlier times in our lives and see all the dangers, close calls, and just plain frightening things that have happened, it's a miracle that we are even here, engaged in a program that will quite possibly change our lives forever. The simple fact that we are here today, searching for a way out, could definitely be counted **as evidence that God is working in our lives.**



- The fact that we have chosen to leave God in the past doesn't mean what?

- The simple fact that we are here today, searching for a way out, can be counted as what?

• • • *Identify* • • •

Can you list any evidence that God has worked in your life in the past? Yes / No
Explain:

5) Knowledge and the World Around Us: *Who Holds It All Together?*

Have you ever wondered what keeps the planets in our solar system moving in such a precise and accurate path? Or how about why a flock of geese fly in a “v” shape?

Why do some trees go to sleep in the wintertime and then wake up in spring? Why are there so many different, beautiful kinds of flowers? Is there any way to count how many different varieties of birds there are in the world? (I’m sure someone, somewhere, knows.) And how could those birds be so colorful unless someone had a hand in designing them?

Indeed, nature’s complexity and order is amazing evidence of God’s presence. Scientists of our day are constantly trying to gain knowledge of God’s creation; in fact, humanity has always been that way, continually seeking to learn.



What Does It Mean “To Know?”



► **Know:** To have a thorough understanding of something through experience and/or study.

It seems that now, more than ever, with technology the way it is, we gain knowledge by leaps and bounds. Not only are we now looking at the innermost workings of the most complex cell in the human body with electron microscopes, we have also placed a massive, long-distance magnifying glass in

outer space, called the Hubble Space Telescope, to look at worlds unknown, **all in an effort to gain knowledge of things around us.**

As we study these things, we are continually finding out how little we really do know about our incredible universe and even our immediate environment. We don't teach our surroundings; our surroundings teach us. All of the knowledge gained from the study of the world around us convinces us **that there is someone far greater in wisdom and creative power than ourselves.**

What would it hurt then for us to make a decision to get to know this someone, called God, better? When you think about it, who knows us better than **the one who created us**, and what better time than now to gain knowledge of Him **so that we can learn more about ourselves and how to make better choices?**

- What does it mean to know?
- Why did scientists develop the electron microscope and place the Hubble Space Telescope in outer space?



- Knowledge gained from the study of the world around us convinces us of what?

- Who knows us best?

Why would it be good to gain knowledge of Him?

• • • *Identify* • • •

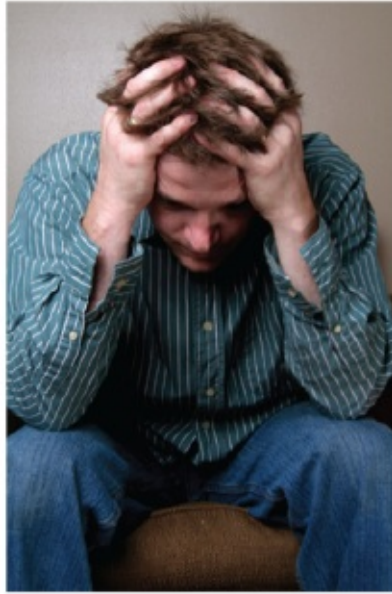
What evidence for God do you notice in the world around you, such as nature, etc.?

6) Logic and Decisions: *Can We Ever Learn to Be Practical?*

As we look back at some of the decisions we've made in the past, we must agree that some of them were not very logical. In fact, if we were to be totally honest with ourselves, many of those decisions got us into a lot of trouble. As we learn what causes bad decisions to be made, we will also learn how to slow down and take the time to use logic to make some very important decisions regarding our recovery. What is logic?



► **Logic:** Sensible, rational thought and argument rather than ideas influenced by emotion or whim.



If you have ever made **a decision based on anger, jealousy, or frustration, chances are the decision was a bad one.** We can, however, make choices based on logic and reason. If God is real and loves us and wants only the best for us, wouldn't it be logical to write down some of the possible things that could happen in our lives if we were to choose to believe in God—and the possible outcomes if we choose not to believe in God?

The possible outcomes of believing in God are very thought-provoking. Think about what it would be like to have a better **positive outlook on life** or to be able to ask for **help in a time of need.** Just imagine: getting much **healthier**, having **heaven to look forward to**, and, of course, looking forward to **freedom from our addictions.** These are just a few of the possibilities.



On the other hand, looking forward to a possibility of a **life stuck in our addictions, bad health, a lack of outside help** in time of need, and **no hope, especially after death**, does not look like much of an attractive option for us.

- What is logic?
- What can cause bad decisions to be made?
- What should we use to make good decisions?
- Write down some of the things that could happen in our lives if we were to choose to believe in God—and possible outcomes if we choose not to believe in God.

Believing in God

Not believing in God



Did you know? A normal human heart beats 101,000 times a day. During a lifetime, it will beat about 3 billion times and pump about 800 million pints of blood.

"I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. This is why right, temporarily defeated, is stronger than evil triumphant."
—**Martin Luther King, Jr.**

7) Belief and Acceptance: *Does God Really Want to Help Me?*

There comes a time in our lives when we need to make a decision. Are we going to begin to believe and trust in what God says? The time for that decision is now. Not because it just might be another way out, but because it's the only way out of our addictions. How do we know that God wants to help us? Well, if we ask God what He has to say about it, He will tell us; in fact, He says so in the following Bible text:



“I am the Lord your God; I strengthen you and tell you,
‘Do not be afraid; I will help you’ ” (Isaiah 41:13 GNB).

What does it mean to believe?



► **Believe:** To accept that something is true or real.

► **Believe:** To be confident that somebody or something is worthwhile or trustworthy.



As we've seen before, God wants to re-create us in His own image, and we've used logic and reason to determine whether or not we should even believe in God. We have also seen that we have not been effective in controlling our lives; even though we have tried our very hardest, we have failed.

So now it's time to decide whether or not we are going to give God a chance, if we are going to accept Him as true and real, and after looking over the evidence, are we confident that He is trustworthy.

- The word "believe" in this step carries two definitions. What are they?

1.

2.

- Are you willing to apply these two definitions to your relationship with God? Yes / No

8) Conclusion

We have learned in Steps 1 and 2 that we have been created with freedom of choice and that we can now choose each day to believe in God. We also learned that "our way" is what has kept us in our addictions and that God wants to restore us and our lives back to sanity.

God's ways are different than ours. In order to know God, we first must believe that He is. We like to say, "Let me see it, and then I'll believe it." But God says, "Believe it, and then I'll let you see it."

I must begin to believe that this is the only way out of my dilemma. I must remember that I have been created with freedom of choice and that I can now choose each day to believe in God. Yes / No

Signature

9) Step 2 Exercise

Ask God for help as many times a day as you need, but at least three times a day. Keep walking and keep drinking lots of water.

Weekly Progress Chart

Day of the Week	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
Write in the number of glasses of water you drank today:							
Write down the number of minutes you walked today:							
Did you make contact with your accountability partner today?							
Did you journal today?							
Did you review Step 2 in your workbook today?							
How many times did you ask God for help today?							

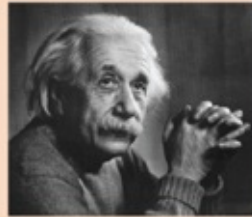
Step Three

Complete Control

Now that I have begun to believe in God, I must ask myself: “Am I willing to give Him complete control of my life?” Am I ready to put that belief into action? Am I tired of fighting things on my own? Do I really want help?

Did you know? 50,000 cells in your body will die and be replaced with new cells—all while you have been reading this sentence!

“We can’t solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them.”
—Albert Einstein



1) Freewill: What Exactly Does It Mean?

God always has our well-being in mind, and **He doesn’t ask us to give up anything that would be in our best interest to keep.** He also knows that the path of addiction is a desolate and lonely one filled with misery and destruction. **It does not please God to see His children suffer.** He wants to put all of us on a path full of joy.

*So how do I find this path of joy? How do I surrender myself to God?
All the promises I’ve made about my addiction to others and myself have failed.*

Because we know all about our broken promises in the past to quit or to do better, we already have little confidence in our own sincerity. We feel like God will not accept us because we have been so untrustworthy.

But I will not despair—God has given me a will, and I will exercise that will with His power.

- Does God ask us to give up anything that would be in our best interest to keep? Yes / No
- What is it that does not please God?
- What has God given us that we may exercise?

Learning Statement

“We must understand the true force of the will—the governing power of the mind in every person, the power of choice” (Ministry of Healing, p. 176).

This power to decide, it is a liberty that God has given to us, and it is our privilege to exercise that freedom. Our world would not be free, and we would not be free as individuals, if we did not have the power to choose. God has given each of us a mind so that we can think things through and use our will to make, and follow through on, good decisions. We must now learn how to exercise our wills on the side of God.



- What do we find is the true force of the will?

"Everything depends on the right action of the will. The power of choice God has given to men; it is theirs to exercise."
—Ellen G. White



2) The Big Three: *What Are They, and How Do They Affect My Decisions?*

As far as addictions go, there are three things that drive what we do and influence our choices: **like**, **want**, and **need**.

For instance, we **like** food, we **want** food, and we **need** food.

Sometimes we like something and want it but really don't need it; however, we condition ourselves to need it. We can even convince ourselves that we need something when we know it will destroy us. Then once we decide that we "**need**" it, the **thought of our destruction becomes no longer important to us**, or out of necessity, **we will actually make ourselves believe that we are not destroying ourselves**.

Here's where the proper exercise of the will comes in. We must first choose to be honest about the big three—and not lie to ourselves.

- What three things will influence our choices?

1.

2.

3.

- What is the danger in convincing ourselves that we need a certain thing?

Or

• • • *Identify* • • •

First, list your addiction or addictions, and then answer the three questions below them. Remember to **be honest!**

Addiction _____

Do I **Like** it? Yes / No

Do I **Want** it? Yes / No

Do I **Need** it? Yes / No

Addiction _____

Do I **Like** it? Yes / No

Do I **Want** it? Yes / No

Do I **Need** it? Yes / No

Addiction _____

Do I **Like** it? Yes / No

Do I **Want** it? Yes / No

Do I **Need** it? Yes / No



What have I learned from this exercise?

Learning Statement

“We cannot change our hearts; we cannot control our thoughts, our impulses, our affections. ... But we can choose to ... give Him our will; then **He will work in us**” (Ministry of Healing, p. 176).



- If we choose to give God our will, what will He then do?

- I believe that God has created me with the freedom to choose and that I can choose to give Him my will. Yes / No

3) Trust: *Whose Business Is It Anyway?*

When we ask God for help and trust in Him, it now becomes His business.

This means He will work for us and in us, and He will help us with those difficult choices in our recovery that we must make.

We thought for a very long time that we'd been in control of our lives, but we really weren't. We thought we had the strength to overcome on our own, but we didn't. When we trust in God, we now make our recovery His business. What is trust?



► **Trust:** Confidence in and reliance on good qualities, especially fairness, truth, honor, or ability.



If we put our trust in God, He will come through for us. He will guide us and direct us. How do we know this? We can ask Him by simply reading His Word, and His Word will tell us.

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths” (Proverbs 3:5, 6 NKJV).

The **old behavior of trusting our own judgment and relying on ourselves must change**. We must be willing to do this because our lives depend on it. Turning one's life over to the care of God is a choice that must be made every day and, quite possibly, minute by minute.

Learning Statement

“‘How am I to make the surrender of myself to God?’ You desire to give yourself to Him, but you are weak in moral power, in slavery to doubt, and controlled by the habits of your life. ... Your promises and resolutions are like ropes of sand” (*Steps to Christ*, p. 47).



Like the quote above says, **our promises are like ropes of sand**—they fall apart through our fingers. So we need to trust someone else. We must believe what God says in Proverbs 3:5 (above) and now put our beliefs into action; **we must now trust God with every decision. This will require some new habits and serious effort on our part.** It's an old saying, but it is still so true: Recovery is simple, but it's not easy.

- What is trust?
- What does Proverbs say about how much we are supposed to trust God?



- What is old behavior in regards to trust?
- What are our promises like?
- How many of our decisions are we to trust God with?
- What will this require on our part?



"Perhaps God brings us to the end of our resources so we can discover the vastness of His."
—Neil Anderson

Did you know? Your system of blood vessels—arteries, veins, and capillaries—is over 60,000 miles long. That's long enough to go around the world more than twice!

4) Mindset: *Can I Take a New One On?*

From now on we must take on a new mindset, a mindset that says, "He leads,

not me.” It’s now His battle, not ours.
What is a mindset?



► **Mindset:** *A set of beliefs or a way of thinking that determines somebody's behavior and outlook.*

“For as he thinks in his heart, so is he” (Proverbs 23:7 NKJV).

Here is God’s promise: “You will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:13 NKJV). The whole heart must be given to God. In order to have our nature renewed, in order to begin the process of transformation, **we must take on this new mindset of giving ourselves completely to Him.**

Surrendering all to the will of God involves a struggle, but we must submit to Him before we can be transformed. He yearns for **us to give ourselves to Him.** He is eager to work His will in us, but we must choose whether or not we will be set free from the bondage of our addictions.

- What is a mindset?



- What new mindset must we now take on?



- What does God yearn for?
- I am now ready to take on a new mindset. Yes / No

Did you know? The average human produces a quart of saliva a day—10,000 gallons in a lifetime.

"The dumbest people I know are those who know it all."
—Malcolm Forbes



5) Surrender: *Does It Really Mean Give Up?*



When we hear the word “surrender,” we often get a mental picture of a soldier waving a white flag. He’s been captured by the enemy, and his life is over. However, that description does not fit the definition of what “surrender” means in recovery. In fact, it’s the exact opposite—by surrendering, we are actually being freed from the enemy.

What are two different definitions of surrender?



- A) **Surrender (in addiction):** To yield to a strong emotion or temptation for the sake of self-gratification.
- B) **Surrender (in recovery):** An act of relinquishing control or possession to somebody or something for healing purposes.

It is important that we understand the difference between these two definitions, because they are diametrically opposed to one another.

On one hand, if we are yielding to temptation or emotion for the sake of gratifying self, that is old behavior, that is addiction, **the behavior that we are trying to walk away from, the giving of ourselves over to a certain substance or behavior that in the long run will hurt us** and, quite possibly, many others.

However, **if we are relinquishing control to someone or something for healing purposes, that is recovery.** And, of course, we’ve learned that this

something or someone is God. This is the new behavior that we must openly embrace in order for us to get well.

- Which definition of the word “surrender” is old behavior?

Why and what is this behavior?

- Which definition of the word surrender is new behavior?

Why and what is this behavior?

(Note: *The word “surrender” in this case doesn’t mean “to give up.” It means “to give over.”*)

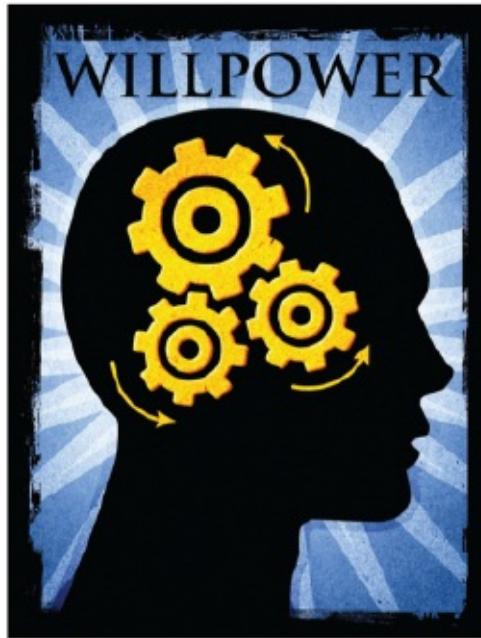
- I am ready to exercise my freewill and to “give my life over” to the care of God. Yes / No

*I realize that this won’t be easy and that the results might not be immediate; nevertheless, this is my decision: **I choose life over death!***



By allowing God to work in us to do according to His good pleasure, our lives can be brought under the control of His Spirit. “Let me live that I might praise you. ... I have strayed like a lost sheep” (Psalms 119:175, 176 NIV).

6) Exercises to Strengthen the Will: *More to Do?*



Believe it or not, our minds need exercise—just like our bodies do. If we don't use our body's muscles, they will shrivel up and get weak. Our brain is the same way; it needs exercise so that we can get and remain mentally fit.

Many times in life, what we feel like doing or what we want to do is not always the same thing as what we should do. We might not always feel like getting our exercise for the day or drinking the right amount of water, but we know that in our recovery it's the right thing to do. But just knowing what's right and wrong is not enough either; we still must act on it.

The following exercises will help strengthen our will so that we can be prepared to take action as we make better decisions. It's not necessary to take on the entire list all at once. Just begin with one or two exercises and progress from there.

- 1) Ask God to strengthen your will and to connect your will with His.

2) Get healthy with good food, exercise, and rest. (See Step 4, DD.)

3) Operate your life by plan, not urge. Make this a habit.

4) Complete each task before you begin another.

5) Every day, do something that needs to be done that you don't really want to do.

6) Plan when to get up in the morning, set your alarm, and then do it. (This works best if it's the same time every day.)

7) Practice self-control. Practice denying yourself treats that you would normally have.

(Note: If you are already performing some of these exercises, go ahead and write them down anyway; this will help you better chart your development.)

• • • **Identify** • • •

Of the above seven exercises that can be done to strengthen the will, which ones do you choose to begin incorporating into your life?



Lessons from Life

The Ducks: I mentioned earlier in another lesson the 10-acre piece of property that my wife and I live on just outside of Lincoln, California. It has a seasonal creek that flows through it from about November until June every year.

Each year, ducks come to mate and raise their young in the little pond that I built on the creek. They're very fun to watch, and things usually go well for them during their mating rituals and as they raise their little ones—unless there is an unusually low amount of rainfall for that year. If that happens, the pond can run dry and it becomes very difficult for the mothers to raise their little ducklings. That was the case a few years ago.



That year, a mallard hen had about six ducklings; she was trying to raise them in this little puddle of muddy water where the pond was supposed to be. I actually installed a pipe to the pond from my water supply to supplement the pond and keep some water in it until the ducks were old enough to leave. It was so dry that year that even the early spring grass was already brown, there was dust everywhere, and it was hard to keep water in the pond without running the water continuously.

One evening I walked over to check the pond to see if the water needed to be turned on. It was late—just at dusk. Unfortunately, I didn't realize that the mother was still there with her ducklings, and I spooked her. She flew off into the night, and the little ducklings scattered into field. They went every which way, chirping for their mother as they wandered into the tall brown grass.

I went into the house and waited for the mother to come back. An hour went by, and I became very worried. Finally, she returned in the darkness and began trying to gather up her ducklings. I heard her quacking all through the night, and when I looked out the window in the morning, she was still wandering the field looking for her ducklings, but there were none. She also looked all day the next day, and all through the next night, but to the best of my knowledge, she lost them all. I felt so bad, but there was nothing I could do but learn a valuable lesson.

The Lesson Is This: Just as this mother hen was the source of life for her little ducklings, God is our source of life.

And just as it was easy for me to separate those little ducklings from their source of life, it is easy for us to get separated from our source of life. It is so important when turning our lives over to the care of God that we don't get separated. We don't have any better chance at surviving without God than those little ducklings could survive without their mother.

7) Conclusion

We have learned that we now must trust God with our every decision by taking on a new mindset and giving ourselves completely to Him. We must yield to be healed, but this doesn't mean that we yield to strong emotion or temptation; rather, we surrender to God for healing purposes.

The old behavior of trusting our own judgment and relying on ourselves is

what got us into trouble in the first place. In this step, we learned the difficult but rewarding task of giving God complete control of our lives.

- *I will yield to be healed. I now choose to give God complete control of my life.*

Signature

8) Step 3 Exercise

Memorize this text:

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths” (Proverbs 3:5, 6 NKJV).



Also, keep asking God for help as many times a day as you need, but at least three times a day. Keep walking and keep drinking lots of water. Begin to incorporate the will strengthening exercises (above) into your life and begin a daily devotion at the same time every morning.

Weekly Progress Chart

Day of the Week	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
Write in the number of glasses of water you drank today:							
Write down the number of minutes you walked today:							
Did you make contact with your accountability partner today?							
Did you journal today?							
Did you review Step 3 in your workbook today?							
How many times did you ask God for help today?							
Did you do your will strengthening exercises today?							
Did you do your daily devotion?							

Step Four

Different Direction

*Not only am I becoming different and getting into a different vehicle with a different driver, **I am also on a different road going in a different direction** with different people.*



"We must travel in the direction of our fears."
—John Berryman

Did you know? Nerve impulses to and from the brain travel as fast as 170 miles per hour.

1) Becoming a New Creature: Can You Say “Change”?

If you're human, chances are you don't like change. Most of us don't. Most of us associate change with fear of the unknown or with stepping out of our comfort zones.

One thing that we must remember about our recovery is that it is a process. Change doesn't happen overnight. The fix is not a quick one, because most of us have been in our addictions for a long time. It would be nice just to be able to flip a switch and instantly be made well, but recovery doesn't usually work that way.

Yes, the saying is true: “No pain, no gain.”

Did you know? Every human being spends about half an hour as a single cell.

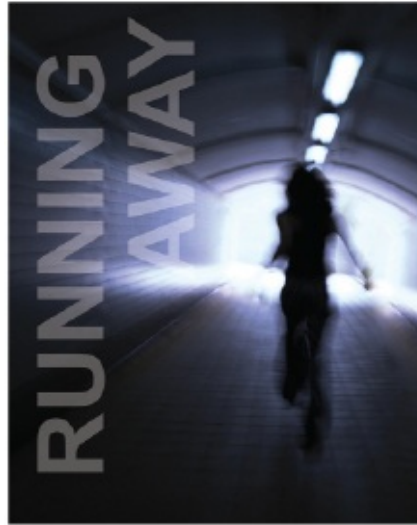
"You cannot change your destination overnight, but you can change your direction overnight."
—Jim Rohn



If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have

passed away; behold, all things have become new (2 Corinthians 5:17 NKJV).

The above text says that the “old things have passed away” and that “all things have become new.” That’s good news. But what does it mean?



When we were in our addictions, chances are that we dealt with events, good or bad, that came along in our daily lives by doing one of or both of these two things: **running and self-medication.**

In actuality, running is self-medication and self-medication is running. In other words, if something good came along in our lives, we didn’t know how to respond to it so we ran from it by medicating ourselves with our addiction, whether the addiction was a substance or a behavior. If something bad came along in our lives, we didn’t know how to respond to it either, so we self-medicated also.

Medicating ourselves with our addictions is how we run from a problem without actually getting away from it geographically. Living life on life’s terms in the beginning of recovery can be difficult for an addict, **because he now has to learn how to turn to something else other than his addiction.** Instead of running away from God and away from our problems, we now head in a different direction: **We now look to God and allow Him to help us deal with our problems, free from our addiction. This is how all things become new.**

- Typically, how does an addict deal with life, both the good times and

bad times?

- In what way can the beginning of recovery for an addict be difficult?
- How will “all things become new”?



“The great thing in the world is not so much where we stand, as in what direction we are moving.”

—Oliver Wendell Holmes

Did you know? Your ears and nose continue to grow throughout your entire life.

2) Influences: *How Many Kinds Are There?*



In addiction recovery, and in life in general, there are only two kinds of influences: good and bad. For the most part, there is no middle ground; people will either have a good influence on us or a bad influence on us.

Most of the time, it's not hard to tell where the bad influences are in our lives; however, if there are any questions at all about how something influences you, it

is best to discuss it with a member of your recovery group or your accountability partner.

What is an influence?



► **Influence:** *The power that somebody has to affect other people's thinking or actions by means of argument, example, or force of personality.*

Now that we have allowed God's influence to enter our lives, we **cannot allow other influences to alter the direction that God has mapped out for us.** This means we absolutely must leave the **old places** where we played, and however possible, get new **playmates** and even some new **playthings**.



From now on, we need to concentrate on taking care of ourselves, and this can only happen if **we walk away from the bad influences in our lives.** This can be very hard to do, and on the surface it might even sound a little selfish. But we won't be able to help anyone later on down the road if we don't concentrate on getting well ourselves now.

If you've ever been on an airplane and heard the instructions from the flight attendant on what to do when the oxygen masks drop from the ceiling in the event of emergency, you probably recall that you were always instructed to put the oxygen mask on yourself first and then help someone else get his or hers on.

This is the way it is in recovery, so now **we must do whatever it takes** to get well.

- Now that we've allowed God's influence to enter our lives, what is it that we cannot allow?
- What three things must change?
- Taking care of ourselves can only happen when we do what?
- What must we do to get well?



• • • *Identify* • • •

Old (*Things that must change*)

People

Places

Things

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

New (*Good influences in your life now*)

People

Places

Things

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

I choose each day the right people, places, and things in my life. Yes / No

3) Thoughts: *Just How Powerful Are They?*



Our predominant thoughts influence our behaviors and attitudes, and they control our actions and reactions. As our thoughts are, so are our lives.

It works this way: Right thoughts will lead to right actions, right actions will lead to right habits, right habits will form a right character, and a right character is what makes people right with God and helps them get along with the people around them.

So what is a thought?



► **Thought:** *An idea, plan, conception, or opinion produced by mental activity.*

Some people have a tendency to think on negative things and to dwell on them. This is not healthy. The only way to change our negative tendencies is by positive action:

“Whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report ... think on these things” (Philippians 4:8 KJV).



"A man is but the product of his thoughts. What he thinks, he becomes."
—Mahatma Gandhi

Did you know? The tooth is the only part of the human body that can't repair itself.

Each evening, write down a Bible verse on a small card. Read it the next morning and take it with you wherever you go that day. Read it often, and even share it with others. When something negative or troubling comes into your mind, get this card out and read it. Do not underestimate the power of God's Word and what it can do for you.



We have to begin the practice of right thinking on right things, and this is a simple exercise that will help us do that. Here are some great Bible verses to start with:

- Psalm 118:6
- Isaiah 40:31
- Jeremiah 29:11–13
- Philippians 4:13
- Philippians 1:6
- 2 Corinthians 12:9

Lessons from Life



The Turkey: My recovery from methamphetamine, cocaine, and alcohol addiction has not been all peaches and cream. Needless to say, the good times have far outweighed the bad, but there are still times when I battle with deep sadness and depression.

This happens because of the brain damage that was caused by the drugs. Now, these bouts of depression have become shorter, fewer, and farther apart as the years have passed, but there was one time in my life when I experienced about two weeks of deep sadness. I just couldn't seem to pull out of it. I was pleading with God, asking Him to make it all go away—but it wouldn't go away.

Then it happened: One day I was in the barn feeding the cows when I heard this terrible banging noise. It would bang repeatedly for five times or so ... and then suddenly stop. This happened over and over. I thought, *What in the world is that?*

As I peeked around the edge of the barn door to see what it was, I noticed a turkey pecking away at the chrome bumper on my truck. The turkey would walk by the bumper, look straight at it, and begin pecking at it. I thought, *What a bird-brain!*

But as I looked closer, I saw what the turkey was doing. Every time he walked by the bumper, he saw his own reflection and attacked it. This happened over and over and over, and it might have gone on all day had I not come around the corner to run him off, quite possibly saving him from beating himself to death by smashing his head into this huge piece of metal. Then it hit me: I realized what my problem was and why I was so depressed.



The Lesson Is This: Every time the turkey walked by that truck, he looked in the bumper and saw a reflection of himself. He didn't like what he saw, so he began pecking at himself. I realized that this is what I had been doing to myself for the past two weeks.

You see, I was continuing to dwell on every terrible thing that I had done in the past and how bad of a person I was—I was pecking myself to death! Through this experience, the Lord revealed to me that if I was going to succeed in my recovery, I needed to keep my eyes on Him. When we begin looking at ourselves too much and take our eyes off Jesus, the source of our healing, we can become discouraged, dejected, and depressed, and just like the turkey, we will literally peck ourselves to death.

Did you know? A person can live without food for about a month, but only about a week without water.

*"Few people think what they think they think."
—Chuck Gallozzi*



• • • *Identify* • • •



List some good things in your life that you can choose to think about:

4) Prayer: *The Breath of the Soul*

A sincere prayer has real power behind it; it produces results. We have to believe this when we pray! Why? God knows our minds and hearts, so why not talk to Him as if He already knows the situation?

What is a prayer?



► **Prayer:** A spoken or unspoken address to God. It might express praise, thanksgiving, confession, or a request for something such as help or somebody's well-being.

Simply put: **Prayer is conversation with God as with a friend.** And believe it or not, He actually is our friend! Keep in mind, however, that prayer does not bring God down to our level; it helps us ascend to His.

We can think of God as a doctor who is **on call 24 hours a day**, a doctor who knows our condition very well and is ready to help us with any physical or

spiritual need that we might have. God understands exactly what we are going through.



Learning Statement

“The Lord is acquainted with your situation. Nothing escapes His notice. He will hear your prayers; for **He is a prayer-hearing and a prayer-answering God**. Put your trust in Him, and He will certainly bring relief, in His own way”
(*Evangelism*, p. 392).

- What is prayer?

- What are God’s office hours?



- God is two things when it comes to prayer; what are they?

_____ and _____

When in prayer, focus on the positive. Don't dwell on the negative. Dwelling on the negative keeps that part of the brain active; when the negative part is active, **the positive part of the brain isn't active.**

Instead, pray more for **the new habits that you want God to help you to create in place of your bad ones.** What does it mean to be positive?



► **Positive:** *Confident, optimistic, and focusing on good things rather than bad.*

Pray confident, positive prayers, thanking God for the changes occurring in your life. Look back in your journal and reflect on all the constructive and positive things that have been happening in your life.



- When the negative part of the brain is active, what part of the brain isn't active?

- When praying, what are we to pray more for?

• • • *Identify* • • •

What are some of the positive changes taking place in your life?

What are some new habits that you will be praying for God to create in your life?

(Note: See more about prayer on page 75.)

5) The Brain and the Body: *How Much Are They Connected?*

Our minds and our bodies are both gifts from God, and they are very closely related. How we feel physically will impact how we feel mentally. Everything is related. We can't neglect our bodies without expecting that neglect to impact our minds.

Learning Statement



“The **body** is the only medium through which the **mind** and the soul are developed for the up building of character”
(Ministry of Healing, p. 130).

“Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:16 NIV).



Thinking of our bodies as **the dwelling place of God's Spirit** might be a new way of thinking, but if we desire it, we must also choose to give the Holy Spirit a welcome home with a healthy diet and plenty of water and exercise.

Always remember that **a healthier body means a healthier mind**. And your healthy mind is where God wants to dwell. He knows what we've done to ourselves physically and mentally, so not only does **He want us to get healthy so that we can feel better**, **He wants us to get healthy so we can think better**. He simply wants us to recover the ability to think straight.

- What are our bodies the dwelling place of?

- What does a healthier body mean?

- Why does God want us to get healthy?

So commit yourself to these eight healthy practices: fresh air, sunlight,

self-control, rest, exercise, proper diet, the use of water, and trust in God.

This is a very simple list of things that we can take in and practice in our everyday lives. And just think—it's all very, very inexpensive!



• • • *Identify* • • •

Of the above eight practices that you can do to improve your health, what do you need to add to your life to become healthier? How will you do them?

Lessons from Life

The New Overpass: My wife has been employed by a Christian ministry called Amazing Facts for many years. The ministry's office is located on a road called Sunset Boulevard in Rocklin, California.

At one time my office was located very near to Amazing Facts, just off of Sunset actually. For quite some time, I had driven the same route whenever I picked up my wife for lunch from her work, about three times a week, or whenever I stopped at her office.

Now there is an intersection between those two offices, Highway 65 and Sunset Boulevard, that had been exactly the same, untouched by construction or detours, since before we both worked in that area. In fact, we have always driven to work exactly the same way—and driven home from work exactly the same way—every day for almost a decade.

However, one day the state decided to construct a new type of intersection, building Sunset Boulevard as an overpass over Highway 65. Today, there is no longer a stoplight, which had been there as long as I can remember.

When they finished up the project, they rerouted traffic to the new way, the way it will always be in the future. That was very interesting for me, to say the least, because I couldn't seem to get used to the new way. Needless to say, I ended up on the wrong highway several times since they made the switch. The really sad part is that I had to drive three miles in the wrong direction just to turn around and get back heading in the right direction. That one wrong turn took me six miles out of my way, but I just couldn't catch on!



The Lesson Is This: The way habits are made can be compared to the way we drive on a roadway. Once we know the route and have driven it many times, we no longer read the road signs; we simply drive by habit.

Our brains work the same way: We do things over and over until it becomes a habit. Then once we've created that habit, the brain is basically freed up to think

about and do other things while the habit is being performed subconsciously.

Old habits are hard to break because our brains are constantly trying to do what they already know. So if we're making wrong turns when we're trying to create new habits, it's okay. In fact, we might even say these things should be expected.

Even though the wrong turns we make in our recovery sometimes take us a ways out of the way, just as I found myself heading in the wrong direction and had to turn around to get home, we must also turn around and head back in the right direction so that we can make it home.

6) Conclusion

In this step, we've learned that we are new creatures heading in a new direction. We've learned that, from now on, we are no longer to run from our problems, but that we will deal with them by turning a different direction—our newfound path toward God.

And now that we are allowing God's influence to enter our lives, we cannot allow other influences to alter the new course that He has planned for us.



We will also begin thinking on constructive things; when in prayer, we will be focusing on the positive. We've also learned that God wants us to get healthy so that we can feel better and think better, because a healthier body means a healthier mind.

- *I have chosen to head in a different direction in my life, away from bad influences, and toward good ones.*

Signature

7) Step 4 Exercise

Memorize the text below:



“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new”
(2 Corinthians 5:17 NKJV).

Also, keep walking, drinking lots of water, and praying, and begin to incorporate the eight healthy practices into your life that were listed earlier. And don't forget to write down a Bible verse on a small card each evening. Read it the next morning, and then take it with you that day. When something negative comes into your mind, get it out and read it.

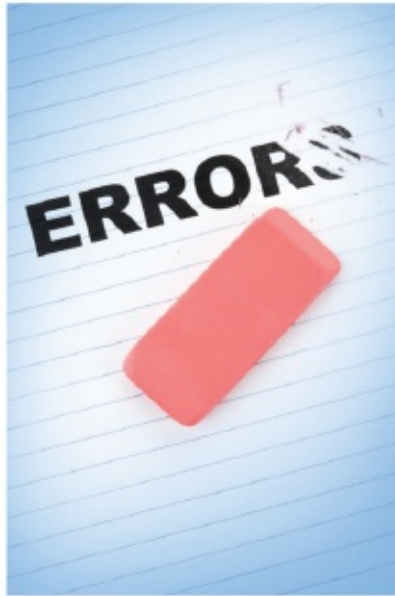
Weekly Progress Chart

Day of the Week	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
Write in the number of glasses of water you drank today:							
Write down the number of minutes you walked today:							
Did you make contact with your accountability partner today?							
Did you journal today?							
Did you review Step 4 in your workbook today?							
How many times did you ask God for help today?							
Did you do your will strengthening exercises today?							
Did you do your daily devotion?							
Did you perform healthy practices today?							
Did you write down a new Bible verse on a small card and take it with you today?							

Step Five

Erase Errors

*It's now time for me to deal with the mistakes and bad choices that I made in the past. **I clearly have wronged others, and I owe it to myself, to God, and to them to right those wrongs wherever possible.***



Everyone makes mistakes, but God wants to erase them. And He not only wants to erase them, He wants to replace them from now on.

In Step 4, we learned that we're heading in a new direction and that we're now going to let God's influence into our lives. The best way to do this is to spend more time in His Word—the Bible—and to follow the instructions given there.

In this step, we will learn God's method of erasing and replacing; in a sense, it's a way to free us up from carrying around all of the excess mental baggage that will do nothing but harm us in our recovery and in the distant future.



"I shall try to correct errors when shown to be errors, and I shall adopt new views so fast as they shall appear to be true views."
—Abraham Lincoln

Did you know? You'll drink about 20,000 gallons of water in your lifetime.

1) The Bible: *Can We Trust It?*

Many people do not believe that the Bible is reliable. But the fact is the Bible is very trustworthy as an historical document. In fact, the Bible is actually a book of history. It describes people, places, and events in a variety of degrees of detail. It is basically an historical account of the people of God throughout thousands of years.

If you open to almost any page in the Bible, you will find the name of a place and/or a person. Much of this has been verified from archaeology. Though archaeology cannot prove that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, it can prove whether or not some events and locations described in it are true or false. So far, however, there isn't a single archaeological discovery that disproves the Bible in any way.



"The Bible is worth more than all other books which have ever been printed."
—Patrick Henry

Did you know? Each square inch of human skin has approximately 32 million bacteria on it. Most of them are harmless.

In the book of Psalms, King David actually asks God to examine him to find out if there is any evil way or evil thoughts in him. If the king of Israel thinks it's a good idea to ask God to examine him, don't you think it would be a good idea for us to ask God to examine us?

"Examine me, O God, and know my mind; test me, and discover my thoughts. Find out if there is any evil in me and guide me in the everlasting way" (Psalm 139:23, 24 GNB).



- Who should we allow to examine our thoughts?
- Why?



If we read it prayerfully, with an open heart, **the Word of God will speak to each of us on an individual basis.** It will tell us **things about ourselves and quite possibly about things that we never knew existed.**

The Bible is an incredible book: As it speaks to us, **it is able to discern our thoughts and motives.** It has the incredible ability to dig deep and **tell us if our thoughts are bad or good.** The Bible puts it this way: **“It is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”** This is very important because **we need**

to know whether or not we're thinking straight so that we can treat ourselves and other people better.

“The word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12 NRSV).

- If we read it prayerfully, with an open heart, what will the Word of God do?

- What will it tell us?



- As it speaks to us, what is it able to discern?

- How does the Bible put it?

- Why do we need our thoughts judged and why is this very important?

- Should we then, according to what we have just read, spend more time reading the Word of God in order to help us with this step? Yes / No



2) Righting Wrongs: Assuming Responsibility and Making Apologies

Assuming responsibility for our unacceptable behavior in the past **will melt the guilt and pain that we carry around from that behavior, and ultimately it will free us from those thoughts that tend to pull us back into our addictions.**

I clearly have wronged others, and I owe it to myself, to God, and to them to right those wrongs wherever possible. This task calls me to be as open and honest as I can be about my part in my dealings with others.

The Bible puts it this way: “Go at once and make peace with your brother” (Matthew 5:24 GNB).

- What will assuming the responsibility for our unacceptable behavior in the past do for us?

3) The Ten Steps of an Apology



► **Apologize:** To express remorse for something, to say that you are sorry for something that has upset or inconvenienced somebody else.

We all know what an apology is: It’s an expression of sorrow or guilt over having said or done something that is recognized to be hurtful or damaging; it is a request for forgiveness. But we all also know that it can be really hard to swallow our pride and say, “I’m sorry.”

Here we will learn the difficult task of making amends for mistakes that we’ve made and repairing the effects of our angry words.



First Step: Determine what went wrong. Did you say something insensitive, no matter how true it is? Did you fail to come through on a promise? Was the offense recent or long ago? You can't apologize effectively if you don't know what you did wrong. If you don't think you did anything wrong, then express regret for the feelings they are experiencing as a result of what you did.

Second Step: Take full responsibility, without sharing the blame with anyone else and without presenting long, drawn-out explanations.



► **Blame:** To consider somebody else to be responsible for something wrong or unfortunate that has happened.

Sometimes it's hard to take responsibility for the things that we've done that hurt people. But God will help us do this. Remember, while apologizing when we are at fault, we can only blame ourselves; in other words, **we are to accept responsibility for our part, and our part alone, in whatever issue we are considering.**

It might very well be that other people or circumstances contributed to the situation, but you cannot apologize for them; you can only apologize for yourself, so leave them out of it. There's an old saying that's still so true: "We

are only responsible for keeping our side of the street clean.”

Third Step: *Realize that there are no excuses.*



Do not try to think of or offer an excuse. **A true apology never has an excuse in it.** Take full responsibility for what you did. And if the people to whom you apologize reject it, that’s their problem. Don’t take it back. Still say, “I’m sorry.”

“Never ruin an apology with an excuse.”
—Kimberly Johnson



Did you know?
On average, you blink
15,000 times a day.

Fourth Step: *Decide when to apologize.* Sometimes, apologizing immediately after your mistake is best, but sometimes not. The hurt of an unkind word can often be numbed with a quick apology, but other offenses might require that the offended people have time to cool down before they are willing to even listen to your next sentence. Either way, the sooner you apologize for your mistake, the more likely it will be viewed as simply an error in judgment and the more likely your offense will be forgiven and forgotten sooner.

Fifth Step: Write your apology down. Construct a letter to the people you're apologizing to, rehearsing what you will say in person. Not only will this help you remember what to say when you're face to face with them, but you can also bring the copy with you and hand it to them if you find the apology too difficult to express in words. But never forget that a direct and honest apology is best. Do it face to face, if possible. A phoned, emailed, or recorded apology might show a lack of sincerity and effort.

Sixth Step: Begin the apology by naming the wrongdoing. Be specific about the incident so they know exactly what you're apologizing for. Make it a point to avoid using the word "but." ("I am sorry, but" means "I am not sorry.") Also, do not say, "I'm sorry you feel that way" or "I'm sorry if you were offended." Be sorry for what you did! Otherwise, it seems like you're blaming them and that you aren't really sorry.

Seventh Step: Make amends. Think about what caused you to make the offense. Is it because you tend to react instantly to certain comments, without pausing to consider an alternative point of view? Is it because you are unhappy with your life and you take it out on others?

Eighth Step: Express your gratitude for the role they play in your life. Ask if they will give you a chance to make up for what you did wrong. Tell them that it is your hope that you have learned from your mistake and that you are taking action to change and grow as a result. Make a clear request for forgiveness, emphasizing that you do not want to jeopardize or damage the relationship—and wait for their answer.

Ninth Step: Be patient. If the apology is not immediately accepted, thank them for hearing you out and leave the door open if they wish to reconcile later.

Tenth Step: Carry out your promises. This is every bit as important as every other step. A true apology entails a resolution, and you have to stick to your word for the apology to be sincere and complete. Otherwise, your apology will lose its meaning, and trust could disappear beyond the point of no return.

- What is the definition of the word "apologize"?
-

-
- While apologizing, we can only blame ourselves; in other words:
-



- What will a true apology never have in it?
-

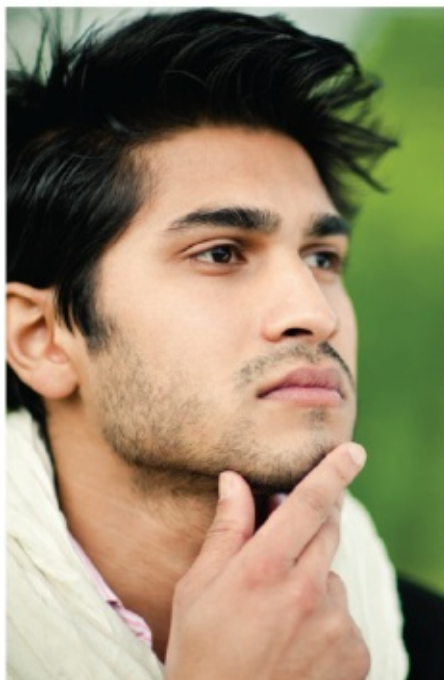
- What kind of apology is best?
-

- What are we to be sorry for?
-

- In regards to the apology, what are our hopes?
-

• • • **Identify** • • •

Prayerfully ask God to search your heart and take an inventory of your conscience.



- **When** have you upset or inconvenienced someone else by your behavior?

What is that behavior?

How does this usually happen?

Where does this usually happen?



I understand that I am not to hold anyone else responsible for my behaviors and actions. Yes / No

I owe some people an apology: Yes / No
Explain:

I owe God an apology: Yes / No
(Note: See the exercise of apologizing to God in Step #6: Forever Forgiven.)

Did you know? A typical athlete's heart churns out up to eight gallons of blood per minute.

"An apology is the superglue of life. It can repair just about anything."
—Lynn Johnston



4) God's Replacement Therapy: *Setting Up for Success*

When battling addictions, God has put ways in place for us to overcome them.

The gambling addict is not going to be able to quit his bad habit by sitting in his car in front of a casino and repeating the words "I'm not going to gamble" over and over again; it just doesn't work that way. Nor should the smoker who stares at the cupboard where his cigarettes are stashed, saying the words "I'm not going to smoke" over and over again, think he will break free.

So let's now look at how we can be set up for success, as God shows us from

some Bible texts how we can overcome different types of behavioral addictions. In each example below, you'll find a Bible text, a bad behavior, and how each bad behavior can be replaced by a good behavior. Remember, this doesn't happen overnight; it is a process, a process in which we rely totally upon God.

Example #1: "Therefore, putting away lying, 'Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,' for we are members of one another" (Ephesians 4:25 NKJV).

Remember in our first step when we learned that we even lie to ourselves? In the above text, the Bible says that we are to stop lying. But it doesn't stop there; it also says that **we are to replace the lying with the truth.**

Example #2: "Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers" (Ephesians 4:29 NKJV).

Here the Bible is very clear that we are not only to stop speaking bad words, but that **we are to replace those bad words with good, helpful, and kind words that will be supportive to those who hear them.**

Example #3: "Nor give place to the devil. Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need" (Ephesians 4:27, 28 NKJV).

As we can see, the Bible tells us not to steal, but once again, it doesn't stop there. It says that we are to **replace that stealing with getting a job, or doing something productive, and then by helping the poor however we can.** This includes **stealing time. If we are practicing an addiction, chances are, we are stealing time from someone.** Also, now that we are letting His influence into our lives, **the Bible says that we are not to let the devil back into our lives.**

This is God's greatest replacement therapy. Believe it or not, God's replacement therapy will work **with any behavioral or substance addiction.** To put it simply: All that we are trying to accomplish with the influence of God's Spirit is to crowd out bad behavior with good behavior.

- How are we supposed to stop lying?

- How are we supposed to stop using hurtful and foul language?



- How are we supposed to stop stealing?

- What does stealing include?

- God's greatest replacement therapy is God's Spirit. Who or what does God's influence replace in our lives?

- What addictions will God's replacement therapy work on?

Lessons from Life



The Dump Truck: One day we were replacing a section of asphalt with some concrete in our church parking lot.

My friend Daniel had a very large dump trailer, which was quite handy for anything that we needed to do around the church. I had brought my little Kubota tractor in to pick up the asphalt and put it into the trailer. As I was loading the trailer, I wondered at what point would this trailer be overloaded; in other words, how much of this rubble should I put in before we go out and dump it?

I called Daniel and talked it over with him. He said that there was a line on the inside of the trailer about a foot down from the top rim. If I were to fill the trailer to that line, it would be able to dump just fine. So up to the line it went with broken asphalt and base rock. At the end of the day, Daniel hooked up to the trailer and took it out to dump it. A little while later, I got a phone call from him saying that the trailer was out at the dumpsite, stuck in the mud—it wouldn't dump! "Oh no," I thought. "What are we going to do?"

Well, there was only one thing that we could do: We went out the next morning and began unloading the rubble by hand. Now, there is no way to get a shovel into a pile of broken asphalt and base rock; it just doesn't work. So with our bare hands, we unloaded about five tons of material. It took about four hours of nonstop burrowing, wiggling, jerking, pulling, and throwing chunks of asphalt out until we were able to get to the point where the dump trailer would finally dump the rest of the load. After we got the load dumped, it was quite simple to

pull the trailer out of the mud. Then we were soon on our way back to the church to finish the job.

The Lesson Is This: Our lives are loaded down and burdened with terrible things that we've done in the past and some bad things we continue to do. The more of that garbage we put into our personal dump trailers, the harder it is for us to dump them. The task just seems to become more and more insurmountable as the load just grows larger and larger.

There will eventually come a point, and it might already be here for some of us, where we just simply lose the desire to do anything about it. Just like in the story, the trailer refuses to dump.

Whatever you do, don't lose your desire to become free from the weight you are carrying; the load is not too big for God. Even though there might come a point in time when we have to get into the trailer and pull those nasty chunks of rubble out by hand, the Lord will be right there, by our side, helping us and strengthening us. No job is too big with God as our helper. He longs for the day that your load is dumped and your trailer is pulled free.

5) Conclusion



This step has shown us how to examine ourselves by using the Bible as a tool,

as well as showing us when, where, and how to apologize to people we have hurt.

We were also given a “biblical recipe” on how to crowd out bad things and behaviors with good things and behaviors. It’s important that we come to the realization that even though we’ve done some bad things, our lives are not of any less value to God.

In Step 6, we will look at exactly why, no matter how bad we’ve been in our lives, we are still valuable to God.

- I now choose to begin righting wrongs wherever possible.

Signature

6) Step 5 Exercise

Memorize the text below:

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23 KJV).

Also, keep walking, drinking lots of water, and praying. Remember to write your Bible verse on a small card and to do your daily morning devotions. Plus, begin to read the Bible whenever you can. Begin reading in either Psalms or Proverbs, in the Old Testament, or from Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John, in the New Testament.



Notes:

Weekly Progress Chart

Day of the Week	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
Write in the number of glasses of water you drank today:							
Write down the number of minutes you walked today:							
Did you make contact with your accountability partner today?							
Did you journal today?							
Did you review Step 5 in your workbook today?							
How many times did you ask God for help today?							
Did you do your will strengthening exercises today?							
Did you do your daily devotional today?							
Did you perform healthy practices today?							
Did you write down a new Bible verse on a small card and take it with you today?							
Did you read your Bible today?							

Step Six

Forever Forgiven

He has forgiven me; now I must forgive myself and others.

In this step, we will answer some of the most essential and important questions in terms of our recovery.

Some questions we'll address deal with forgiveness and why it is so important in our recovery. Plus, we'll also get answers to some basic questions that we might have about God, such as, *Who is Jesus?*, *Will God ever hold our past behavior against us?*, and *What is salvation?*

It's very important that we answer these questions so that we can learn just exactly what great plan God has in store for us.



"He who is devoid of the power to forgive is devoid of the power to love."
—Martin Luther King, Jr.

Did you know? There are more than 600 muscles in our muscular system.

1) The Good News: A Look at the Big Picture

God runs His universe on two main principles: **love and freedom**.

He has given us the ability to make choices by exercising our freedom, as we learned in the earlier steps. **Without freedom there can be no love.** You can't force someone to love you; they have to be free to choose to love you.

However, with that freedom to choose given by God, there comes a risk—the risk that we might choose someone other than Him. Sadly, this is exactly what we have done. The human race, as a whole, has chosen another leader, someone else to love rather than God. From early in our history, back in the garden of Eden, **we have chosen the devil as our leader.** By choosing him, we have chosen to love ourselves rather than others. **The opposite of love is not hate; it**

is self, or selfishness. (This does not mean that we are not to take care of ourselves. Taking care of ourselves is not selfish; it is necessary.)

If we look around our world today, we can see the results of what happens when all the people in a species love themselves more than their neighbors. We can see the results of a planet full of individuals who have rejected God and chosen another leader. There is pornography, drugs, fighting, and hatred everywhere you look nowadays. This type of behavior is not in harmony with the way that God does things, yet He has still respected our freedom to choose.

God knows that the people on this planet are headed for destruction because of our conduct. Now this behavior that humanity is engaged in, behavior that is out of harmony with God, behavior called sin, carries with it **a death sentence as its consequence.** The decree is death because sin hurts people; eventually, God will put a stop to people hurting other people. **No one is exempt from this sentence;** we all deserve it, because, as the Bible says, “All have sinned” (Romans 3:23).

But there is good news: **God has made a way out for us.** He has made provision for us. **He has sent His Son, Jesus, to take our death sentence away, to pay the price for us.** Jesus has come and died for us so that we don’t have to die. The Bible puts it this way:

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16 NKJV).



And not only has Jesus died for us to take that sentence of death away, He also rose again from the dead to be our everyday helper in fighting the urges and temptations that come along with living on this planet.

When Jesus came and lived His life on Earth as a human being, He showed us how to live in harmony with God. **It is Jesus' life and teachings that we are to embrace**, and by embracing that life and those teachings, we are telling God that we want to live another way—the right way, His way.

By making this choice and walking in the path that He set before us, God will continue to forgive us and **will never hold our past against us**. That is good news!

Who is Jesus? Simply put, **Jesus is the true God, in human flesh, who died for us, and now lives for us**. And for all those who **accept and embrace Him as their Lord and Savior**, that is salvation. That also is very good news!

- On what two main principles does God run His universe?

and

-
- Can there be love without freedom? Yes / No

- Who has the human race chosen as their leader?

-
-
- What is the opposite of love?
 - What does sin carry with it?
 - Who is exempt from this sentence?
 - What is the good news?
-
-
- Who did God send to pay this price for us?
-
-
- Whose life and teachings are we to embrace?
-
-
- As God continues to forgive us, will He ever hold our past against us?
Yes / No
-
-
- Who is Jesus?
-
-
- What is salvation?

2) Self-worth: *Am I Really Valuable?*



A true sense of our self-worth comes when we understand that we were bought at a significant price.

Jesus paid an infinite price for us with His life, so that we might be claimed as one of His and be set free from the bondage of our bad behavior. What is our worth? Since we were bought with an infinite price, **then our value must likewise be infinite**. God has purchased us—He set the value, and God doesn't buy junk.

Knowing that we have been purchased by God, and that we are His, will help us from becoming prideful in respect to how far we have advanced in our recovery. It's not about us anymore. It's about God and what He's done for us.

Keeping this in the forefront of our minds will also be a continual help in our efforts not to do anything that might misrepresent God.

There will be people who will not like that we've changed our lives around. Most undoubtedly, we will even suffer persecution for it. Some of our old friends might become irritated at the fact that we have chosen to live a new life. The Bible even describes what might happen, yet it also gives us instructions on how we are to act if the situation ever arises:

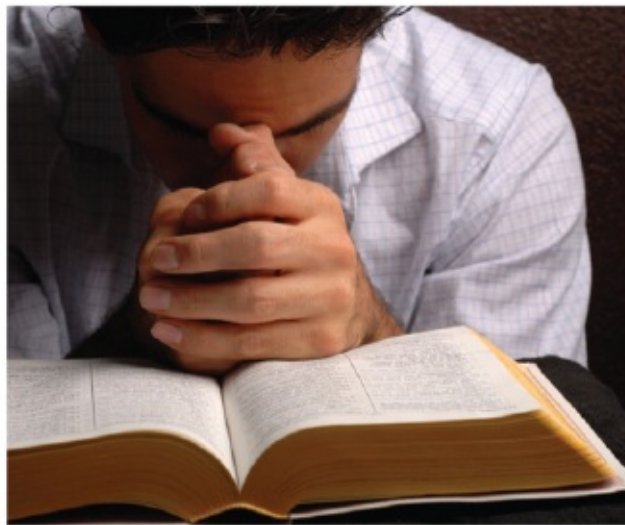
“But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. ‘And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled.’ But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the

hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed” (1 Peter 3:14–16 NKJV).

- What kind of price did Jesus pay for us?

- What is our value?

3) Prayer and the Power of Forgiveness, Part One: *One More Aspect of Being Truly Set Free!*



The conditions of obtaining mercy from God are simple and reasonable. The Lord doesn't require us to do something difficult to gain forgiveness. He simply says that he who "confesses and forsakes" his sin "shall have mercy" (Proverbs 28:13). All that God wants for us is for us to live happy, healthy, guilt-free lives. To live guilt-free, there are certain things that we need to talk to God about in prayer. We need to share with Him the things that we have done wrong. This is the process known as confession.

What does it mean to confess?



➤ **Confess:** To admit a wrongdoing, crime, or error openly or to God in private.

This is between Him and us, and **He is ready and willing to hear and to forgive** so that we might be set free. This is true spiritual cleansing, which the Bible puts this way:

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9 NKJV).

- What does God want for us?

- What does it mean to confess?

- What is He ready and willing to do?



In our recovery, this will be one of the most important Bible texts we can know. In fact, we will learn to continue to draw upon it in times of need, so let's look at it again:

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9 NKJV).

Notice that it says that if we confess, **He is faithful and just to forgive and to cleanse**. This is what **we absolutely must learn to rely on now—God's promises, not ours**. Remember what we learned before: Our promises are like ropes of sand, but unlike us, God is faithful. This is what we must count on.

What does it mean to forgive?



➤ **Forgive:** To pardon someone for a mistake, misunderstanding, wrongdoing, or inappropriate behavior.

The Bible also says that God hears our voices, that He hears our cries, and that we can call on Him. The only qualification for obtaining mercy is that we ask for it. He's always there for us, and He knows exactly what we're going through. There is nothing more difficult for parents than to see their child struggle or suffer, but there is also nothing that will strengthen the bond between child and parents more than when the child brings his or her problems, the mistakes and difficulties that caused the suffering, to his or her parents and allows them to become involved in the healing process.

This is how it is with God; He knows that there will be times when we will suffer and have pain—and that we will most definitely need forgiveness. And just like parents who long for their child to call on them, God also wants us to call on Him and allow Him to become involved in our healing process.

“I love the Lord, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy. Because he turned his ear to me, I will call on him as long as I live” (Psalm 116:1, 2 NIV).

What is mercy?



► **Mercy:** A disposition to be compassionate or forgiving of others.

- If we confess, what will God do?

- What must we absolutely learn to rely on now?

- What does it mean to forgive?

- What happens when we can call on God?

- What is mercy?

Lessons from Life



The Treble Hook: I live in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains in California. It doesn't take much—an hour or so—to hop in the truck and drive to reach some of the best trout fishing in the state. And many years ago, I went

trout fishing quite often, either with my father or with friends.



I recall one time in particular when we went up to Fordyce Lake to do some lake trolling. There were some huge German brown and rainbow trout in the lake, and we were doing quite well with the fishing until the wind kicked up. At that time my friend Mike and I decided we'd better turn back, because the lake was getting choppy.

Now Mike had brought his Springer Spaniel, named Homer, along with us. The dog was very young and quite energetic. We constantly had to keep him and his nose out of where it shouldn't be. Well, for some reason, Homer got the idea that he needed to sniff around in the tackle box. And right about the time he was doing that, Mike turned the boat sharply to miss a large wave—and Homer's nose became buried in the tackle box. When the dog pulled his nose out, he had a great big lure stuck in it. And it wasn't just a single hook lure; this lure had a treble hook (three hooks in one) on it, and all three hooks were shoved up his nose about half-an-inch. Poor Homer was in real pain, and every time he turned his head he yelped, cried, and whined.

We tried everything we could to get those hooks out of his nose, but nothing worked; they just kept going in deeper. Finally, after about 20 minutes of watching this poor dog suffer, I reached over, grabbed his nose in one hand and the lure in the other, and ripped the lure out of his nose. Homer let out a horrible yelp but then almost immediately returned to his happy self—his tongue hanging out, panting cheerfully, and actually smiling. The wound bled for a while, yes,

but after five minutes or so everything returned to normal.

The Lesson Is This: There are things that are going on in our lives, things that we do, that hurt us and other people. And just like that treble hook in the dog's nose, they are very hard to remove. We can try this way and that way and the other way, but for some reason we still can't remove them. The reason? We're afraid it's going to hurt too badly.

The plain and simple problem with Homer that day on the boat was the fact that he had hooks in his nose that needed to be removed. The problem with us is that we have sin in our lives that needs to be removed. It might hurt and even leave scars, but we must surrender to God and allow Him to remove the hurtful things so that we can heal.



• • • *Identify* • • •

With God's help, identify the things that you need to speak with Him about—the things that you need to confess.

Do you choose to ask for God's forgiveness knowing that He will hear you? Yes / No

What does 1 John 1:9 say?

Do you choose to accept God's forgiveness for the bad things that you've done in the past. Yes / No

What does Psalm 116:1, 2 say?

4) Prayer and the Power of Forgiveness, Part Two: *Forgiving Others*

Did you know? In one square inch of skin lay 4 yards of nerve fibers; 1,300 nerve cells; 100 sweat glands; 3 million cells; and 3 yards of blood vessels.

"I can forgive, but I cannot forget, is only another way of saying, I will not forgive. Forgiveness ought to be like a cancelled note—torn in two, and burned up, so that it never can be shown against one."

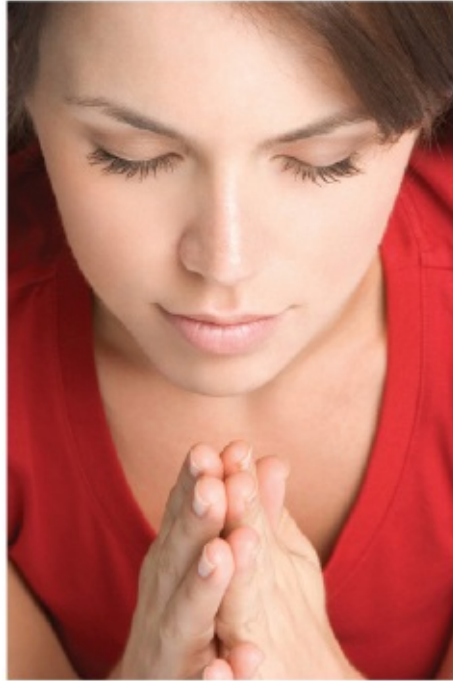
—Henry Ward Beecher



This part of Step 6 will require a great deal of prayer on our parts. Sometimes it's hard to forgive, especially when we've been hurt really bad.

As we learned in Step 4, **daily prayer is essential for your spiritual growth and for your spiritual life itself**. Just as good food is important to physical well-being, prayer is necessary for your mental well-being.

The Bible says:



“Pray at all times, be thankful in all circumstances. This is what God wants from you in your life in union with Christ Jesus” (1 Thessalonians 5:17, 18 GNB).

Jesus prayed to His Father frequently; it was His habit. When His disciples asked Him to teach them how to pray, He responded in this way:

“He said unto them, ‘When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil’ ” (Luke 11:2–4 KJV).

In this statement, we find that Jesus teaches us that we should not only ask for forgiveness from our Heavenly Father, but also that **we are to acknowledge that we are willing to forgive those who have hurt us**.

As we grow in our recovery, reading the Word of God, praying, and gaining more knowledge about the nature of forgiveness, we also find that there is yet another part for us to play:

“If you forgive others the wrongs they have done to you, your Father in heaven will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive the wrongs you have done” (Matthew 6:14, 15 GNB).

As we learn more about the character of God—that He is a kind, loving, forgiving God—we begin to understand the importance and power of forgiveness. As we confess our own shortcomings and accept God’s forgiveness, it brings about a change in our lives. **The security and joy of knowing that we are forgiven enables us to gain the mindset, power, and desire to forgive others.**

Learning Statement

“We can receive forgiveness from God only as we forgive others. It is the love of God that draws us unto Him, and that love cannot touch our hearts without creating love for our brethren. ... We are not forgiven because we forgive, but as we forgive. The ground of all forgiveness is found in the unmerited love of God, but **by our attitude toward others we show whether we have made that love our own**” (*The Faith I Live By*, p. 131).



- What is daily prayer essential for?

- How often should we pray according to 1 Thessalonians?
- What was Jesus' prayer habit?
- When we pray, Jesus says that we should not only ask for forgiveness, but that we should also acknowledge that we are willing to do what?
- What does the security and joy of knowing that we are forgiven do for us?
- How do we show whether or not we have made God's love our own?

• • • **Identify** • • •

As I look back on my life, I see there are times when I have been wronged by others. Knowing how much God has forgiven me, and how much He loves me, helps enable me to forgive them.



How and what type of things usually hurt you?

When is it that you usually get hurt by others?

Who is it that usually hurts you or has hurt you in the past?

Did you know? The brain is 85 percent water. Optimal brain function depends on water and lots of it.

*"The only disability in life is a bad attitude."
—Scott Hamilton*



5) Conclusion

In this step, we have not only learned about the power of forgiveness. We've also learned about the "good news," about freedom, about love, and about Jesus and what He has done for us and is doing right now for us.

We've also learned that God has bought us with a price, that we are of value to Him, and that He is ready and willing to forgive our past. We've learned a little more about prayer too—about prayer habits and how prayer is essential for our spiritual growth. And, of course, we've learned about forgiving others and the importance of learning how to do that.

- I can choose, by God's grace, to forgive.

Signature



6) Step 6 Exercise

Memorize the text below:

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our

sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9 NKJV).

Also, keep charting your progress on your weekly progress chart—and begin the process of learning how to forgive others.

Weekly Progress Chart

Day of the Week	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
Write in the number of glasses of water you drank today:							
Write down the number of minutes you walked today:							
Did you make contact with your accountability partner today?							
Did you journal today?							
Did you review Step 6 in your workbook today?							
How many times did you ask God for help today?							
Did you do your will strengthening exercises today?							
Did you do your daily devotional today?							
Did you perform healthy practices today?							
Did you write down a new Bible verse on a small card and take it with you today?							
Did you read your Bible today?							

Step Seven

God's Grace

Keep giving what I've received and let the light shine through me...

As we have followed the steps outlined in this workbook, we have kept very busy, haven't we? As we continue doing the exercises outlined in the weekly progress chart, and even though we are responsible for our recovery, we must always remember that it is God's grace alone that keeps us separated from our addictions.

I have no power in and of myself to overcome any evil influence. It is only by the grace of God that I live to see each new day removed from my addiction.

One of the best ways to keep everything in the right perspective is to tell others what God has done for us. When we tell others what God has done for us, it not only gives them hope, it also solidifies in our own minds the fact that God is responsible for our recovery. As we repeat our testimonies, it reminds us what God's grace has done for us.

Did you know? A sneeze zooms out of your nose at more than 100 miles per hour.

*"The pessimist sees difficulty in every opportunity. The optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty."
—Winston Churchill*



Here are three things to share with others.



1) Hope



► **Hope:** Somebody or something that will bring success or relief.

Sharing our newfound hope in Jesus Christ does many things for us and for those we are sharing with. **Hope helps us concentrate our energies. Hope provides the assurance of something positive and rewarding. Hope calms the emotions. Hope stabilizes our thinking.**

It is very exciting to watch someone who is full of hope; it's also kind of contagious! This is what the good news is all about: giving others hope, the same kind of hope that we have found.

What are four things that hope can do for us?

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)

• • • *Identify* • • •

What are your hopes?

Who have you placed your hope in exclusively?



***Note:** Without hope, there is no motivation for growth and there is little chance for healing. We need to inspire others with hope. This means that we must have a positive outlook on life. This positive outlook will spread to others. Remember, a person can't be positive and negative at the same time—it's impossible.*

Are you willing to be positive? Yes / No

Are you willing to share your hopes with others? Yes / No

Are you willing to share “who you have placed your hope in” with others? Yes / No

How will you do this?

2) Faith



➤ **Faith:** Belief in, devotion to, or trust in somebody or something based on adequate evidence.



"Talk unbelief, and you will have unbelief; but talk faith, and you will have faith ... and your faith will grow, because it is exercised."
—Ellen G. White

Did you know? The human head measures approximately one-quarter of the total body length at our birth, but only one-eighth of the total body length by the time we reach adulthood.

Lessons from Life



The Broken Ankle: I once had two of the greatest bosses in the world—Fred and Bev. When business was good, they could provide work for about 40 men, and they would do just about anything for their employees, or anyone else for that matter.

Once or twice a year they liked to hop on a cruise ship to get away from it all.

On one particular seven-day cruise, they took their grandchildren to the Caribbean. On the second day of the cruise, Bev and her grandson found themselves navigating some slippery tile near the edge of a swimming pool when Bev slipped and broke her ankle. It meant that she was either going home or suffering five more days on that ship with a broken ankle.

However, she didn't want to ruin the grandchildren's trip, so she chose to tough it out. Then came time for the long trip to the airport, the grueling flight home, and the visits to the hospital where the doctors performed surgery to install plates and screws and staples in an effort to get her ankle to the point where it would heal correctly.

After the surgery, the doctors told Bev that she would have to stay off the ankle completely for at least six weeks. Not only was she not to walk on it, but she had to keep it elevated for about 23 hours a day. As you can imagine, this could only happen with her lying on her back for hours at a time.

However, she was also told to do certain exercises to keep her blood from clotting while she was forced to stay in bed for such long periods of time—and to keep her from losing muscle to atrophy. If we don't exercise our muscles, they will weaken. This will happen until they finally shrivel up and waste away. We must exercise our muscles if we don't want to become weak and feeble.

The Lesson Is This: Just as we need to exercise our physical muscles to keep ourselves in shape and to be strong and healthy, we must also exercise our spiritual muscles. In other words, to stay strong and healthy mentally, we must exercise our faith, our belief in God.



While we were in our addictions, our faith didn't get much exercise. As we look back, we can see that the results of that lack of exercise were very apparent in our lives. We nurtured the disease of spiritual atrophy for a long time. So now, even though we have turned to God and the healing will begin immediately, our rehabilitation is going to take a long time; that's just the way it is.

It's interesting to notice the similarities between the physical rehabilitation of our bodies and the spiritual rehabilitation of our minds. Remember, rehabilitation is a process. Just as Bev needed to continue to exercise even though she was lying on her back and in pain, we also—feeling knocked down and in great pain—must get our exercise both physically and spiritually.

As we share our faith with others, it is strengthened—and we are reminded of who we have put our faith and trust in. There is nothing more powerful than **the evidence of a changed life**, and part of that change is the sharing of what God has done for us through faith. For others to find the joy and happiness that we have found, they need evidence—***we are that evidence!***

- What is faith?
- Nothing is more powerful than what?

- Who is the evidence that others need to find joy and happiness?

Learning Statement

“We need to have far less confidence in what man can do and far more confidence in what **God can do** for every believing soul. **He longs to have you reach after Him by faith. He longs** to have you expect great things from Him. **He longs** to give you understanding in temporal as well as in spiritual matters. **He can** sharpen the intellect. **He can** give tact and skill. Put your talents into the work, **ask God** for wisdom, and **it will be given** you” (*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 146).

What is the general consensus of this learning statement?

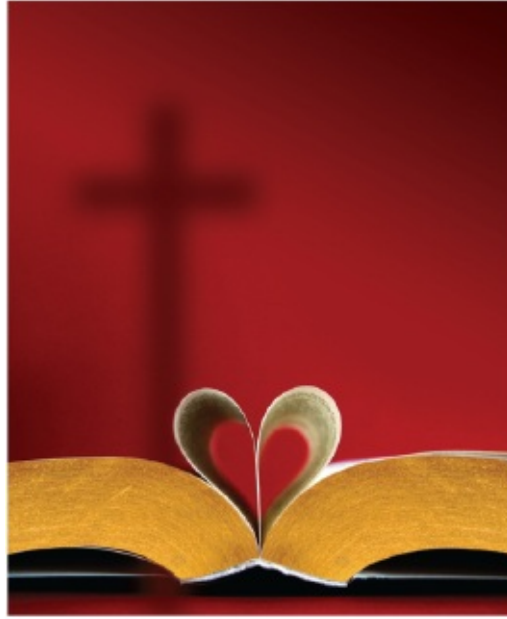
• • • ***Identify*** • • •

Who have you placed your trust in completely?

How has your faith been rewarded?

Are you ready and willing to share your faith with others? Yes / No

How will you do this?



3) Love



► **Love:** The mercy, grace, and charity as shown by God to humanity.

God loves us unconditionally. He has proven it by sending His Son to die for us so that we don't have to die. This is love, a love that we don't fully understand but know is real—**because it is working in our lives.**

Sharing the love of God is so important, **because there are many people out there who don't understand it.** They think that God is up there just waiting for them to get into trouble so that He can nail them.

They don't realize that they are already in trouble and that God is trying to help them. God is not our enemy; He is our friend—and by sharing what God has done for us, **many hurting people can come to know that and understand God's love better.**

- How do we know that God's love is real?

- Why is the sharing of that love so important?

- Why is sharing what God has done for us so important?

The sharing of God's love also involves knowing how to treat people. In John 14:15, Jesus says, "If you love me, keep my commandments" (NRSV). What exactly are those commandments? When someone asked Jesus this question, He answered:

“ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’ ... and ... ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’ ”
(Matthew 22:37–39 NIV).

What wise words these are!

If you think about it, what better way is there to treat your neighbor than **the way laid out in God's commandments**? If you love your neighbor, will you ever steal from him, lie to him, want to hurt him, or want to take his wife? We should hope not.

By the same token, if we are to love God with all of our hearts, as He commands us to do, doesn't that mean **we won't put anything ahead of Him in our lives**? This is where it all starts: loving God and loving your neighbor.

God has put His Ten Commandments in a particular order to illustrate a point. The first four commandments deal with our relationship to Him, and the last six deal with our relationships to our fellow human beings. **These commandments can be found in Exodus 20:**

“And God spoke all these words, saying: ‘I am the Lord your God ...’ ” (NKJV).



- ONE: You shall have no other gods before Me.
 - TWO: You shall not make for yourself a carved image and bow down to it
 - THREE: You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
 - FOUR: Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.
 - FIVE: Honor your father and your mother.
 - SIX: You shall not murder.
 - SEVEN: You shall not commit adultery.
 - EIGHT: You shall not steal.
 - NINE: You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
 - TEN: You shall not covet anything that is your neighbor's.
-
- According to Jesus, what are the two great commandments?



-
- What is the best way to treat our neighbors?

-
- If we truly love God, what will we not do?

-
- Where can the Ten Commandments be found in the Bible?



• • • *Identify* • • •

Who loves you unconditionally, even when you can't love yourself?

How has God shown His love to you?

Are you ready and willing to share God's love with others? Yes / No
How will you do this?

Did you know? The number of neurons in the human brain is equivalent to the total number of stars in our galaxy; that is: 100 billion.

*"Nothing is apparently more helpless, yet really more invincible, than the soul that feels its nothingness, and relies wholly on God."
—Ellen G. White*



4) Testimonies of Hope, Faith, and Love

At this point, it is truly fitting that my wife and I share our testimonies with you. We hope that it will accomplish two things: One, it will help validate your understanding that God is real and that He does work miracles. Two, it will help you see that we have been through and are going through the same things you are going through.

Susan

When I was very young, I was sexually molested. From that point on, I felt unlovable, ugly, abandoned, and different from others. I felt like I was walking around with this big black hole inside of me. I had attended a Catholic school from first to fifth grade and was mesmerized by the mystical and beautiful surroundings, but where was God? And if He is so powerful, why did He allow all of the awful things to happen to me?

The first time I smoked a cigarette—at age 10—it made me feel good, and it filled up a little bit of the emptiness inside. But the cigarettes weren't quite enough to fill me up totally, so I moved on to alcohol and then pot. By age 13 I had tried cocaine, and by age 15 I was using it on a regular basis.



By the time I was 19, I was arrested for selling an ounce of cocaine to an undercover drug enforcement officer. It was the first of several arrests and stays in institutions and drug rehab programs. I did whatever I had to do to get the drugs and stay high. I slept with whomever I had to and stole from whomever I had to. It got to the point that nothing was strong enough to fill that hole. Drugs took me to places and made me do things I swore I would never do. I got to the point where I couldn't live without them. I became a liar, a cheat, and a thief.

When I was 31, I was arrested at the home in which I grew up. It was an extremely large drug bust for the Placer County Sheriff's Department, as well as for the city of Lincoln, where my father was the mayor. I had been through and done so much to humiliate my family and myself, but nothing could stop me from doing the drugs.

After three years of abusing the recovery opportunities that the courts made available, my probation officer was fed up with me. I was facing even more time in jail and also prison time. I just couldn't do it anymore on my own and couldn't stay clean, and I knew it. The night before I had to turn myself in, I knew if things didn't change I was going to die. I cried and asked God to help me. I used and ingested many drugs that night but was still unable to get high. Somehow I still ended up getting myself to jail the next day. I was extremely underweight, my hair and teeth were falling out, and I had sores all over my skin.

After being transferred from the main jail to minimum security, I met a woman who asked me why I kept doing what I was doing. I told her that I didn't

have a choice in the matter. It was the only life I knew. I was hopeless. She asked me if she could pray with me and ask God to deliver me from this addiction. I didn't think it would help, but I didn't think it would hurt either. I don't remember exactly what she said.

All I know is that God heard her prayer and that I have never had an obsession to use drugs since! I began to pray simple prayers like, "God, please help me!" And it worked. From that point on I knew that it was only by the power of God that I was able to stay clean.



Everything in my life had to change. I also knew that I had to be as determined and obsessive in my search to know God and do His will as I had been in getting my drugs. If I don't take an active part in a relationship with God on a daily basis, then I will never make it. Each day I wake up and decide if I want to live or if I want to die. I used to blame everyone else for everything that happened to me. I know now that I am the one who makes the choices and decides how to react to the things of this world.

Forgiveness has been one of the best tools God has given me. He has forgiven me so much that I in turn can forgive others. I look back at my past and am amazed at who I used to be and what my life was like. I never dreamed I would be able to live without drugs. After 25 years of drug abuse, I have been clean for 14 years and each day is incredible. Life is still difficult. I have done a lot of damage to my body because of the drug use, but God is so good. It is like the former things have passed away and have been forgotten; I am a new creature. There is a saying: "You can't keep it unless you give it away." The most important thing for me today is to continue to share my story of God's power.

Rich

As I look back on my life, it's hard to pinpoint exactly when things went wrong. I didn't use drugs or alcohol during high school, and I was very driven in everything I did. I excelled in music, sports, and academics—graduating as valedictorian, class president, and earning other numerous awards.

I didn't go on to college, however, but worked as a mechanic and started drinking and smoking with the guys. This became the norm as my conscience was silenced with alcohol. At first it was not a physical addiction. It was more of a routine, a ritual, something I did every afternoon and evening, just like getting up and eating breakfast, even though I felt so bad in the morning; I swore I wasn't going to do it again that afternoon.



I loved rock-n-roll music and joined several bands during my early years of abuse. I also got into construction at the time. The combination of rock music and construction allowed me access to an unlimited supply of every drug imaginable, the taking of which I had assured myself I would never do when I was in high school.

My new friends were all different than from my high school days; impressing them took new talents, such as using cocaine. I fell in love with cocaine at first contact, and my life began to revolve around the acquisition and use of this drug. I began to care about nothing but this drug and the alcohol, both of which I had now become dependent upon, all the while maintaining that I wasn't addicted to anything.

My life began a slow spiral downward. During this period of time, I began dealing large quantities of drugs, storing weapons, and growing marijuana, all of which became normal everyday life for me. Having guns held to my head or stuck in my face were things that I put up with to get drugs. Drugs came first,

before family, girlfriends, and work. My addictions took me down the road to smoking crank and involvement with manufacturing it. I was thoroughly convinced that I couldn't live without drugs; without an overdose amount in my system, I wasn't "normal."



I lived in a one-room garage and slept on the floor with a beer keg as a fireplace to keep warm, with the chemicals to cook methamphetamine buried underneath my sleeping bag. I finally realized I had tried living life my way for 41 years—23 of which in alcohol or drug abuse—and it hadn't worked. There was no one left. Even my girlfriend Susan told me not to come around.

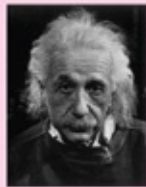
In a fog, I reflected on my life and, somehow without hurting me too much, God showed me what I had done. I cried out to Him for help at the top of my lungs and instantly the obsession for using was gone. As I reflect on this time in my life, I realize that I was thoroughly beaten. My way hadn't worked, and God in His mercy allowed me to suffer the consequences of my choices just long enough for me hear His voice clearly. He told me, "This is it; if you use drugs one more day, you will die." It must have been God's goodness that kept me listening. My life then became a diligent search for the truth.

I realized I needed to surrender to win—to stop fighting everything and simply search for God. He had already helped me to stop using drugs. So I clung to Him and the hope that He would fix my life, which I had spent all those years of abuse ruining.

Susan and I got married shortly after we got clean, and we knew that we had to find truth or we would end up back where we were. We began to understand that God's ways are totally different than our ways. We have seen how seemingly small choices and compromises can lead you down a road that will eventually have you doing things you swore you never would.



The Lord has been so good to us; He has given us a wonderful church family, a new home, great jobs with great employers, and He has also given me back a relationship with my family that I had worked so hard to destroy. There are continually great trials and challenges that come our way, but we know that if we continue to rely on God we will be okay. Most people tend to associate God's miracles with the Man who walked this earth 2,000 years ago—but believe me, Christ still works miracles today!



"There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle."
—Albert Einstein

Did you know? A single cell of the human brain has the capacity to store as much information as the information in five volumes of Encyclopedia Britannica.

Lessons from Life

The Cell Phone: There were times when my company would make some very large concrete pours; in an effort not to conflict with huge cranes and workers on the ground, we would have to begin these pours very early in the morning.



On one occasion, I recall showing up at 2:00 am to start a pour. I was the first one on the job and was there to get the pump set up. When I pulled up to the jobsite, it was very dark. It was not only the middle of the night; it was overcast so there were no stars and no moon out either. When I shut off my truck's headlights, I could barely see my hand in front of my face.

There was a generator with a light rack on it that I could use to light up the work area, but it was about 200 yards away. I couldn't get my headlights to shine on it, so I needed to get my flashlight out of the toolbox, which was in the bed of my truck. Once again, the headlights were no help; it was pitch black back there. I groped around in the toolbox for a while with no success.



Then I thought it would be a good idea to get my cell phone and open it up to use the tiny, barely bright display illumination to help me find the flashlight. This worked just fine. I found the flashlight and was able to cross the jobsite

without getting hurt in the middle of the dark night. I made my way to the generator, fired it up, raised the light rack, and illuminated that portion of the area. Then I was able to proceed to the other four generators and light racks, and the next thing you know, the entire jobsite was lit up like daytime.

The Lesson Is This: What we are learning in this workbook about God and recovery and what we are sharing with others is light. That light is hope, faith, and love.

We are told to let our light shine, and even though it might seem that the light we have to share isn't much and may not be important, this is not the case. The small cell phone light and the flashlight played their parts and were just as crucial to me as the big lights in illuminating that jobsite. And just as it was my job to get the work area lit up that morning, it's our job to let God's light shine through us and illuminate His work area. The world is God's work area, and He needs us to tell people what He has done for us!

5) Conclusion



In this step, we've learned to keep giving what we have received and let the light shine through us. We've also learned about hope and what our hopes are, and we've learned that if we ask God for wisdom as we step out in faith, it will be given to us.

There are many people out there who do not understand God's love, hurting souls who need to come to know Him better. This is where our individual testimonies come in. No one on this planet can refute someone's testimony; no

one can argue or deny what God has done for you, so what better way to give someone hope, share your faith, and show the love of God than to tell them, “God is able!”

6) Step 7 Exercise

Memorize the text below:

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8 NKJV).

Also, keep charting your progress on your Weekly Progress Chart. And begin the process of sharing your testimony with others.

Weekly Progress Chart

Day of the Week	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
Write in the number of glasses of water you drank today:							
Write down the number of minutes you walked today:							
Did you make contact with your accountability partner today?							
Did you journal today?							
Did you review Step 7 in your workbook today?							
How many times did you ask God for help today?							
Did you do your will strengthening exercises today?							
Did you do your daily devotional today?							
Did you perform healthy practices today?							
Did you write down a new Bible verse on a small card and take it with you today?							
Did you read your Bible today?							